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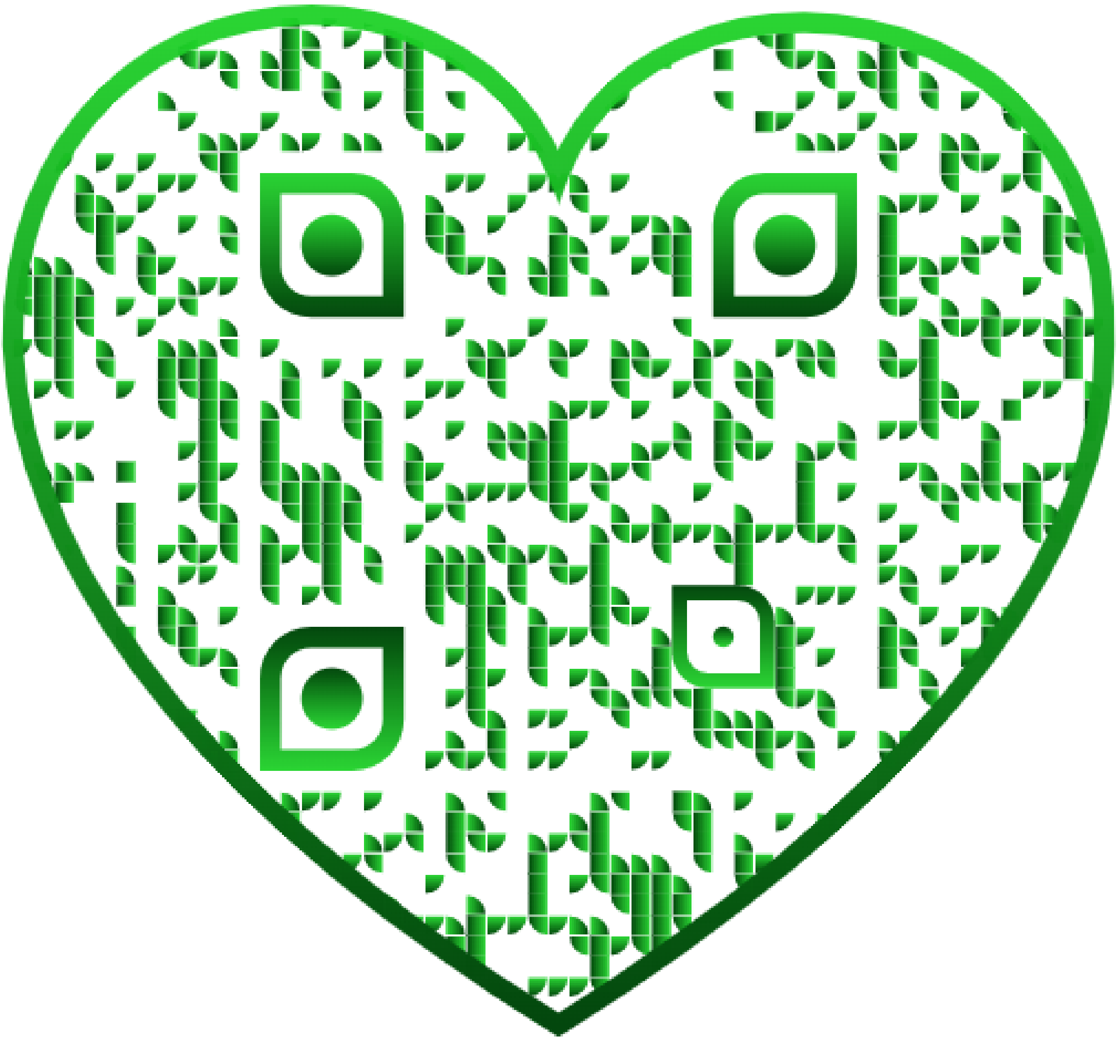

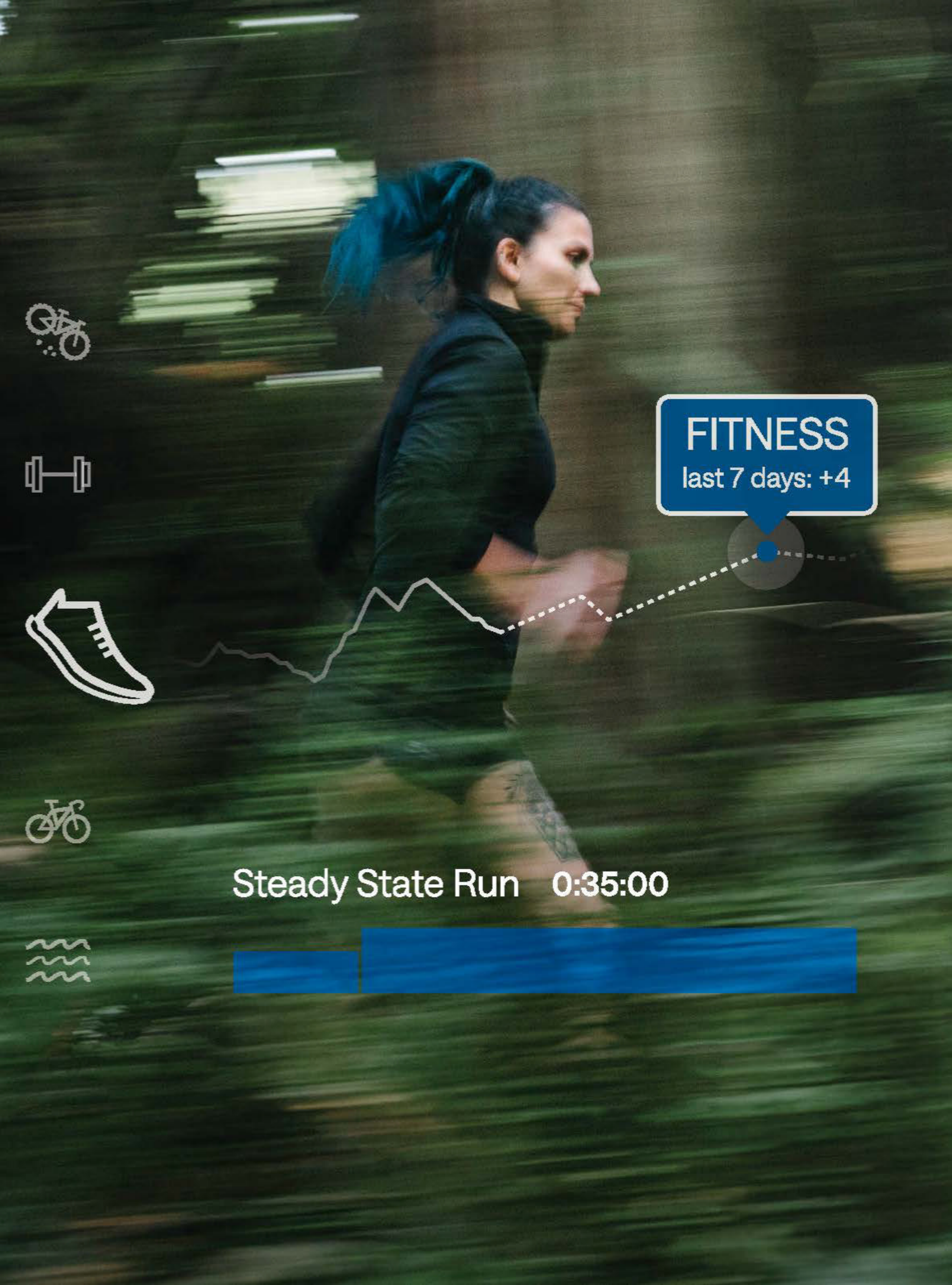
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THE BEST 2025 RACES

Whether you're looking for a fast, flat PB-assured race or an adventure in the mountains, we've found them all in our guide to the year's best events.

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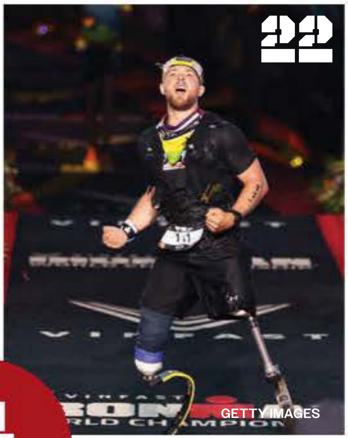

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CROYDE ORCEAN TRIATHLON

Only a few short months until we'll be lining up to race again – time to choose your events, people!

FROM THE EDITOR...

Welcome to 2025! Now the holidays are done, the big question: which races are you doing this year..? I tend to find I fall into one of two categories this time of year. I'm either fired up and entering races that are (quite likely) at the more ambitious end of the scale, or I'm still too focussed on autumn and winter training to realise how quickly the season is about to come around. This year, it's the latter. The year seems to have crept up on me while I'm entering muddy trail runs and wondering when the lakes will be warm again for anything more than a dip. If you're still undecided, then good news though! We've included a look at the 18 races you should be considering (p32) as well as a full listing of everything that's coming up (p90). Race season will soon be here folks, in the meantime – enjoy the issue!

Helen

Helen Webster, editor

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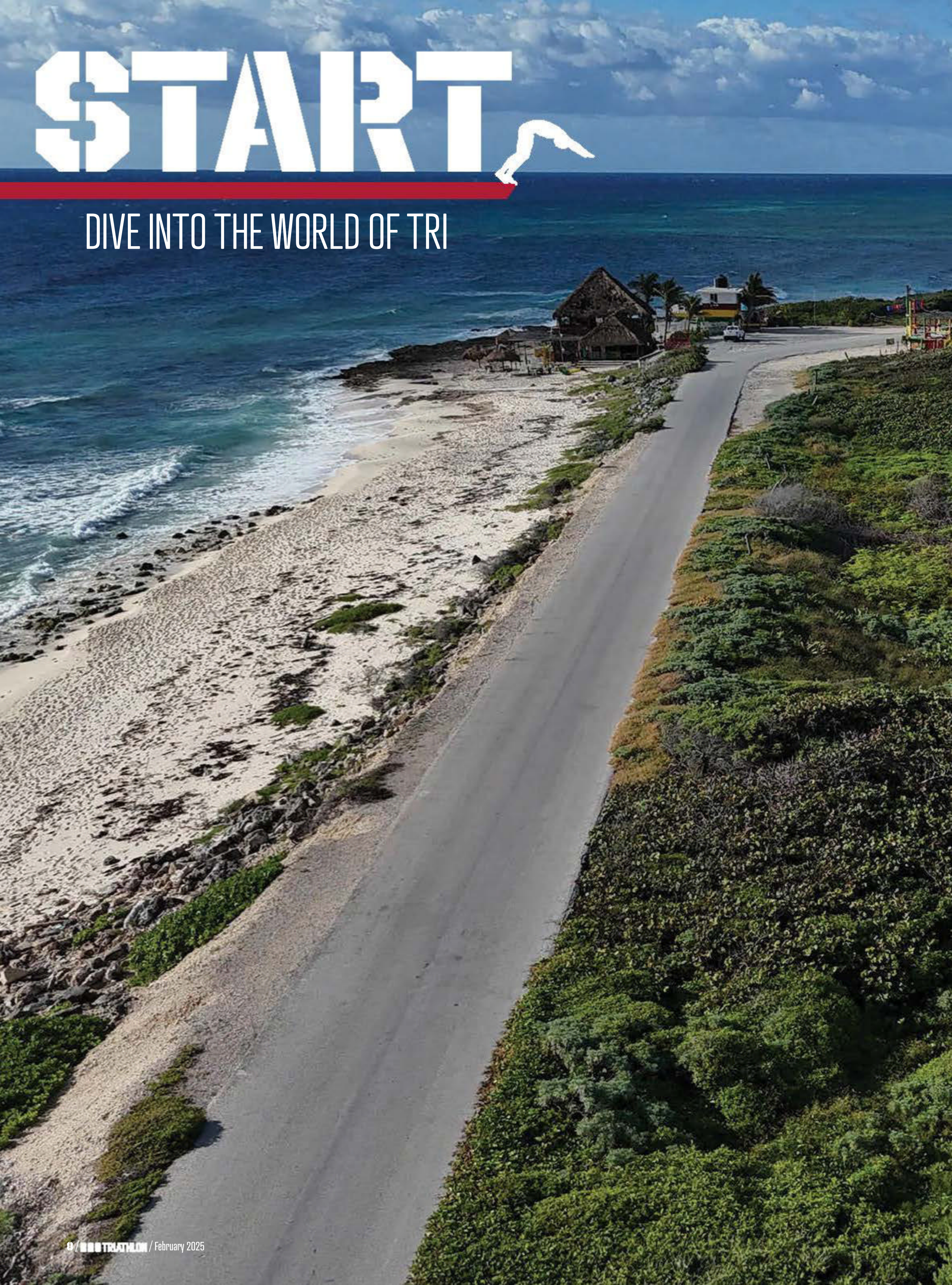
START

DIVE INTO THE WORLD OF TRI



THE BIG PIC

The lush Mexican island of Cozumel is famed for its scuba diving, underwater caverns and one of the world's fastest Ironman swim courses! Headlining this year was Belgium's Marten Van Riel, who toed the startline for his debut Ironman just a week after winning the T100 series. Sadly, after leading for most of the race (inc. a 39:48 swim), the Belgian hit a hole in the road, lost control of his bike and hit a little girl, who was spectating roadside, at 50km/h. Both received treatment in hospital and were discharged with minor injuries.

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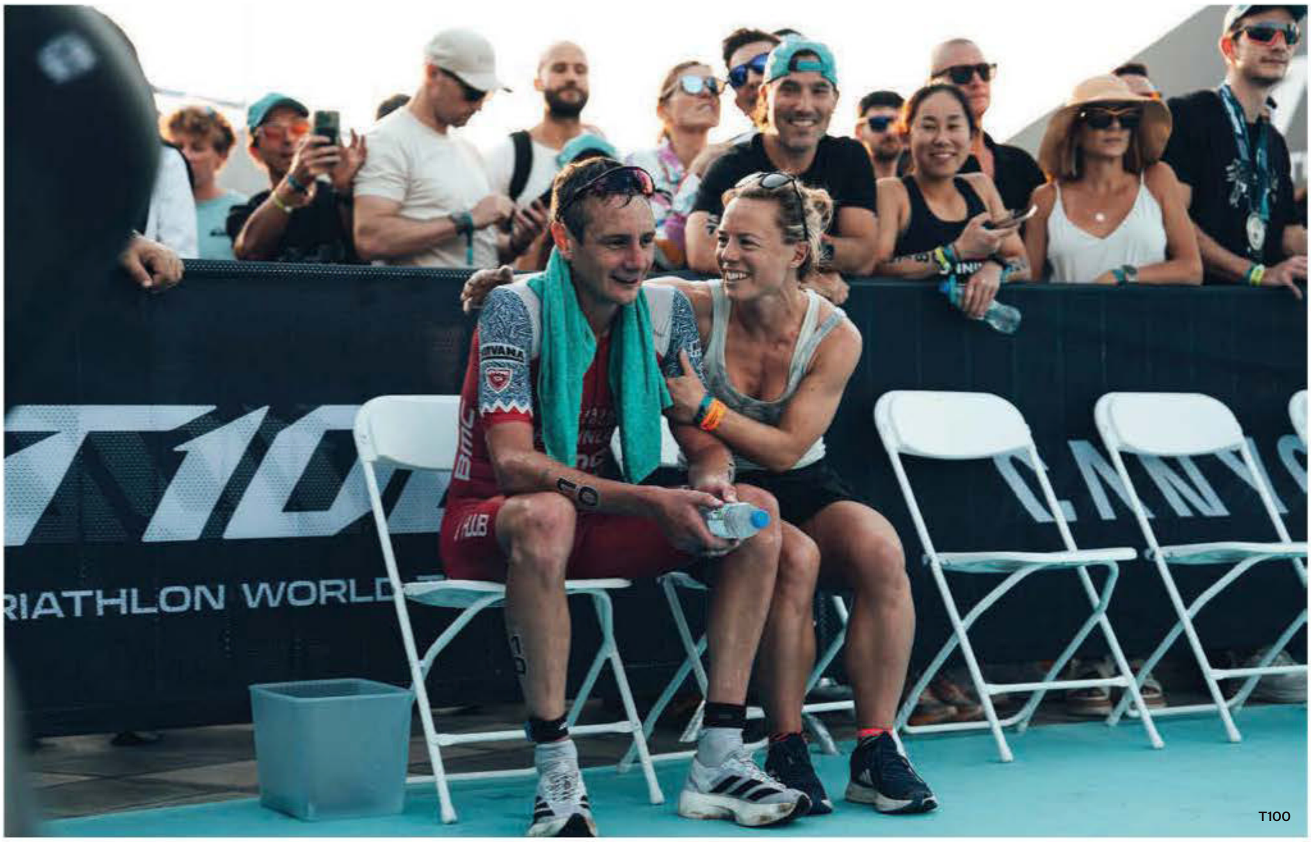

T100

IRONMAN FOR GETTY IMAGES

▲ A relieved Alistair Brownlee is congratulated by his partner Ruth Astle having just finished third in the final race of the T100 in Dubai on 17 November. It was a season's best result for the two-time Olympic champion and his first podium in just over a year. Four days later, he would announce his retirement from pro sport.

◀ A competitor at Ironman 70.3 Mossel Bay, South Africa, applies the brakes as a family of locals takes a surprise trip across the busy bike route. The race, on 17 November, is held in the picturesque harbour town on the Garden Route in South Africa's Western Cape Province. RSA's Matthew Ralphs and Mariella Sawyer were the day's winners in respective times of 4:02:20 and 4:53:14.

▶ Rio Olympic champion Gwen Jorgensen takes an untimely tumble in T2 at the Miyazaki World Cup on 9 November. But the two-time world champion used her still-devastating run speed over 5k to haul herself back into contention and eventually overtake Switzerland's Alissa König in a sprint for the finisher's tape, and win with a time of 59:54.

▼ Three-time Olympic medallist Georgia Taylor-Brown made a golden Ironman 70.3 debut in Bahrain on 29 November. Fourth after the swim and the bike, the 2024 supertri champion took the lead from eventual runner-up Tanja Neubert at the halfway mark of the 21.1km run to win with a time of 3:56:56.

JANOS SCHMIDT/WORLD TRIATHLON

IRONMAN BAHRAIN

GETTY IMAGES

TIM HEMING
Cutting through the spin of tri to address the issues that matter, Tim is a sports journalist who has written extensively on triathlon for the national press.

RIGHT TIME, RIGHT PLACE FOR TRIATHLON'S GREATEST OLYMPIAN

Alistair Brownlee has called time on a stellar career where he made the most of every opportunity to become the most influential figure in British triathlon

STATE OF PLAY

As the sun set on Alistair Brownlee's competitive triathlon career, the backdrop of the Burj Khalifa – the world's tallest building – towered over the Dubai skyline as a final reminder that the Yorkshireman was often not just head and shoulders, but several storeys, above his rivals.

His podium in the T100 series rounded things out in comparatively low-key style, but while his longer distance races often failed to live up to potential, it was the earlier years that captured the imagination and for which he'll be best remembered.

For so much of the time since he sprung to public consciousness in the 2008 Beijing Olympics, it was a perfect storm. The standout was, of course, the gift of a home Games in 2012 when, at 24, he was at the peak of his powers. Even in a London 2012 festival that threw up so many highlights, that Tuesday morning in Hyde Park was something else.

That he had a willing and able training and racing partner in whom he had absolute trust was equally serendipitous. Younger brother Jonny's physical abilities made him the ideal foil; that he was a step behind psychologically, compounded it. It's not to denigrate the younger Brownlee; you don't become a multiple Olympic medallist by being a soft touch. Alistair was just a belligerent bugger in his refusal to lose.

Then there was the environment: Yorkshire. Enchanting enough to become a playground for a lifetime of biking and running, but demanding enough to consistently forge progress, whether it was building the skillset, the engine, or the attitude. Then the people, notably Malcolm Brown and Jack Maitland, who mentored and guided, but gave autonomy. There's no counterfactual to know whether Brownlee would have developed without them both, but both men lived to an athlete-first philosophy.

There was finding a programme that worked, and became a blueprint for Olympic success. All 11 of the Olympic triathlon medals won by GB – more than any other nation – have a connection to Leeds, and whether through inspiration or as direct training partners, none of them would have been won without the Brownlees' influence.

Brownlee was also tactically smart, with the right mix of curiosity in the elements that would make him go faster in an increasingly tech-driven sport, and grittiness that would mean a plastic shopping bag would suffice to keep the feet drier if neoprene overshoes were absent.

The pinnacles were London and Rio, the latter a fine example of finding a way to win a race when – as so often became the case – the build-up was imperfect through injury. The Leeds World Series races of 2016 and 2017 also jump out, and while Cozumel 2016 and his assistance to an ailing Jonny was the moment that transcended – almost winning him the BBC Sports Personality of the Year – I always sensed Alistair's preference was for his brother to have jogged those final metres over the line and won the world title instead.

The achievements are all the more remarkable given that in a tough sport, and following one unblemished all-conquering season in 2009, injuries struck early. He always countered by saying he'd rather have a short world-beating career than an extended mediocre one, and despite being a pro triathlete until the age of 36, that's how it played out. Expectations were high when he stepped up to Ironman racing, and there were world-level performances, but the prophecy that he might be too brittle for the distance ultimately played out.

Should not having an Ironman world title detract from the legacy? Not for a moment. It was the greatest of sporting careers at a time when the sport needed it the most. Sure, there was serendipity for triathlon's greatest ever Olympic champion, but it was serendipitous for all who watched on too.

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WHY I TRI

"I LOVE TRAINING WITH ESTHER. WE ENCOURAGE EACH OTHER TO KEEP GOING"

Triathlon's created an extra-special bond between mother and daughter Sally and Esther Frawley from Wiltshire. Let's meet them...

"I cycled over a roundabout that crossed a tramline and in trying to avoid a puddle my wheel slipped out and I was on the floor" – *Esther Frawley*

COIMBRA 2024

SALLY AND ESTHER FRAWLEY

Sally and Esther Frawley are mother and daughter Great Britain age-group triathletes from Trowbridge in Wiltshire, who've supported one another's journey in swim, bike and run. When they're not training, Sally enjoys gardening, knitting and dog walks with friends. Esther is a recent criminology graduate who loves to travel

Sally says... I was just running, but Esther was competing in triathlons, so I thought I'd add another discipline and become a duathlete! In November 2023, I decided to race at Bicton Park in Devon and found out at Christmas that I'd qualified to go to Coimbra in Portugal to represent my country in the European Championships. There's no better feeling than that.

I love training with Esther, particularly on the days I don't feel like it because we encourage each other to keep going. We share a fantastic coach, Stephen Clark, and have a bit of banter and rivalry when we're doing efforts and both think we can go faster than the other. It's just amazing. I never thought I'd be able to train and race with my daughter.

So many people I met in Coimbra were racing for the first time and we were all feeling very nervous, but it was magical. We're racing against the best in Europe and crossing the finish line with the GB flag with my husband, daughter and coach all screaming will be a memory forever.

After Coimbra, I was encouraged to take on a local triathlon at Dorney Lake. I'd only been swimming for a year and only completed three lake swims, but I ended up winning my age-group in the super sprint. I've now got to keep on swimming in the lake and hopefully one day qualify for the age-group triathlon team, too.

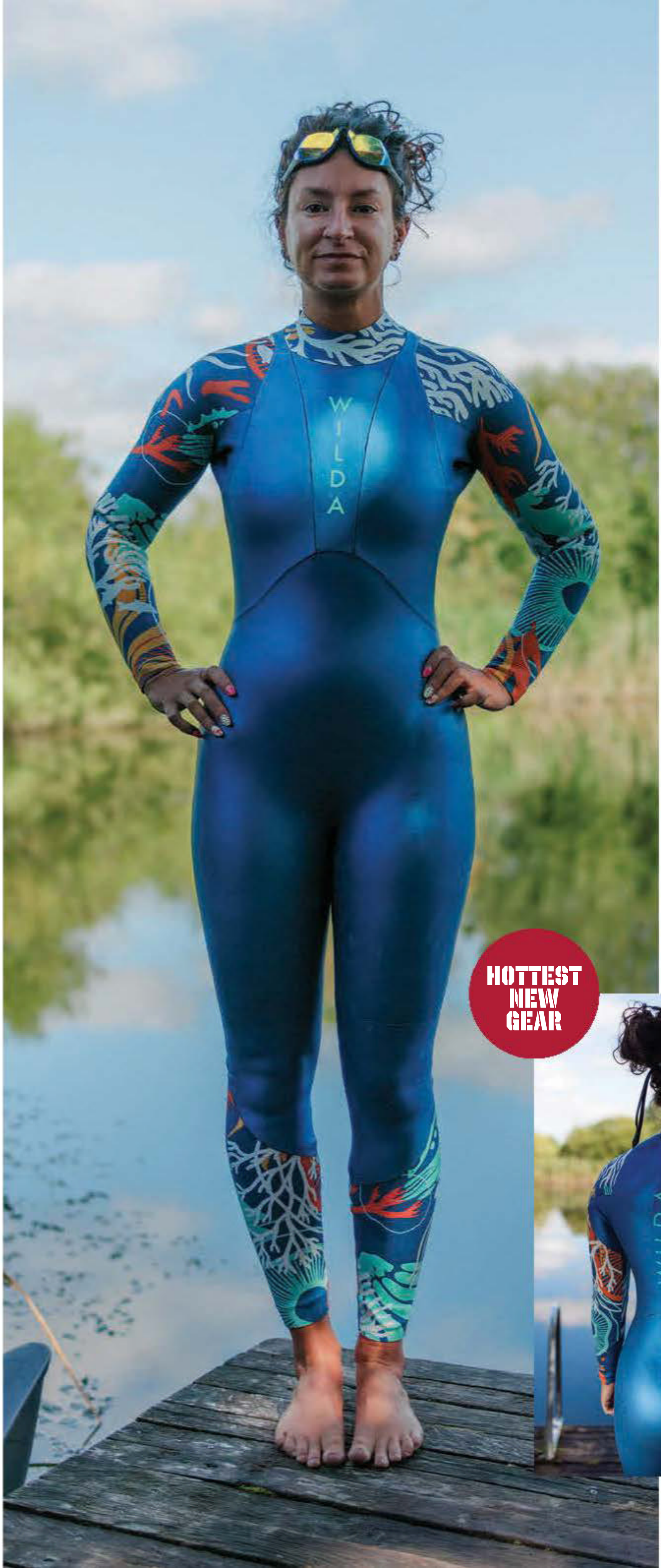
Esther says... Mum and I trained throughout lockdown together, rode on turbo trainers in our conservatory and ran outside, and that gave me the triathlon bug, which has grown to competing for the GB age-group team.

The best thing about competing for the British age-group team is the people you meet along the way. Whether it's been in Menen in Belgium, Pontevedra in Spain or Abu Dhabi in the UAE, I've forged such great friendships. We'll message one another before events and meet up at races. It makes it so much more special.

My favourite race would be my first GB age-group race in Abu Dhabi in 2022. It was a super sprint and I won't forget the feeling of wearing the GB trisuit with my name on. Second to that would be competing in the middle-distance aquabike champs in Coimbra. Two of my friends, Emily and Belinda, both finished on the podium and I won my age-group. Then I got to watch my mum compete in her first ever age-group race, and see all that training and hard work pay off.

We were doing a short bike reccie with our group of athletes the day before my race in Coimbra and chose to head out just after a torrential rainstorm. I cycled over a roundabout that crossed a tramline and in trying to avoid a puddle my back wheel slipped out. Before I knew it, I was on the floor and everyone was staring at me, including all the drivers. I'd broken my pedal and the wheel, and my banana was squashed! Luckily, they had a mechanic in the race village and we managed to get it sorted, but lesson learnt for the future.

My advice for getting into triathlon is to just go for it. There's no age limit.



HOTTEST NEW GEAR

WILDA DART WETSUIT

£265 *Breaking the mould for female swimmers, this vibrant wetsuit is unlike any we've seen before... Let's dive in and find out more*

As Henry Ford once famously said of his cars, a customer could have: "any colour [...] as long as it's black", and the same has always been pretty much true with swim wetsuits.

Here though, new swim brand Wilda have flipped things by producing a suit which is a riot of colour – blue with watery graphics on the sleeves and lower leg with a design and name inspired by the iconic River Dart.

The buoyancy profile is designed with women in mind so the suit is 4mm in the body and 3mm in the legs, the idea being you could do either front crawl or breaststroke in it. The shoulders are 2.5mm with 2mm on the ankles for easier removal. The areas with the graphics are recycled polyester jersey, while the majority of the suit is limestone neoprene. We're pleased to see a good range of sizing here. The suit ranges from XXS to 3XL which covers sizes UK6–20 with provisions made for taller swimmers too.

Will we see these at triathlons? Well, the price point is competitive and if you like to stand out on race day (and be easily spotted in the water) then there are definitely positives here. We're looking forward to trying one out soon.
wilda-swim.com

THE SHORT-COURSE LEGEND

One of the golden era of tri's OGs has called time on his 20-year, short-course career. But what can we expect from Vincent Luis 2.0 in 2025? We caught up with the two-time world champ to talk new plans, new training, and, yes, that home Games...

INTERVIEW
LIZ BARRETT

IMAGE
DELLY CARR/WORLD TRIATHLON

Four days shy of his 17th birthday, Vincent Luis, of Vesoul in France, finished fifth in the 2006 European junior champs, his first full race as a pro (one Alistair Brownlee, a year older than Luis, would finish third). Almost 20 years later – with an astonishing 69 top-five World Triathlon finishes from 126 starts, seven world titles, two supertri titles and an Olympic bronze medal to his name – one of tri's most consistent and powerful athletes crossed his last short-course finish line at supertri NEOM.

Like many sporting greats, Luis' career has been marked by epic highs and devastating lows, not least being sidelined for his home Olympics in Paris this summer. And while the three-time Olympian will always carry the esteemed title of being an Olympic medallist, he was cruelly denied the chance to battle for an individual title in 2021 thanks to the pandemic and injury. Had the Olympics taken place as planned in 2020, Luis was a surefire, and fighting fit, favourite. In Tokyo, he would place 13th.

But Luis has no time for regrets. Yes he knows he can no longer match the pace of the Yees and Wildes of the world, but the booming 100k format could be prime hunting ground for the tough competitor. So will he get a T100 wild card in 2025? Well, he's certainly dropping all the hints…

220: It's been an incredibly emotional year for you. Can you sum up what it felt like crossing the WTCS line for the last time?

Vincent Luis: I was a bit emotional for sure, crossing the line for my last race with the French team. To wear this suit for one last time was a big moment for me. I raced how I like, at the front end, trying to break the race. I enjoyed every single second of it. It was a really special moment and I'm glad I got to spend it with the people I love. It was a great race from a performance and sport point of view, but it was also great for me to have people like my parents there for my last race.

220: What will you miss most about the short-course race circuit?

VL: Mostly the people, not seeing them is going to be difficult. The traveling I won't miss so much! It was actually a lot. But I think also the adrenaline of short-course racing, you know like the technical aspects, the cornering and everything, it was really intense. The rush of racing neck to neck and everyone wants to beat each other, that's a good feeling and I'm going to miss it.

220: Just how hard was it being in Paris that day?

VL: I wasn't actually planning on watching the men's race but with it being postponed I ended up seeing both. I was there to watch [girlfriend] Georgia [Taylor-Brown] race, and of course I was really happy for [Olympic champion] Cass [Beaugrand]. I've known her for 10 years now, so I was really happy to see her grow. She decided to leave the federal system to do her own training and she actually got a lot better as soon as she did that.

And I've always had a good relationship with Léo [Bergere, who won bronze], and I try to be a bit like the older brother and try to help him when he has to make decisions. And again he's an athlete that creates his own training environment and it's working for him. So yeah, I was really happy for them.

But yeah, it was actually quite hard [to be there], but as soon as the start was done, that was it, now it was just time to focus on the future.

220: How has [girlfriend] Georgia [Taylor-Brown] provided support to you this year?

VL: She was really supportive around the Olympic selection period. It's not been easy, but you know I was really prepared to get the bad news, so my mindset was

Luis' best bits

Since he started his pro career back in 2006, Luis has consistently mixed it at the very top. Here are his greatest short-course achievements...

European junior champion, 2008
World junior champion, 2008
3 x Olympian (London, 11th; Rio, 7th; Tokyo, 13th)
4 x mixed relay world champion (2015, 2018, 2019, 2022)
European sprint champion, 2016
2 x supertri champion (2018, 2019)
2 x World Triathlon champion (2019, 2020)
2020 Olympic mixed team relay bronze medallist

Victory on the World Series
LUIS
FRA
HAMBURG WASSER
HAMBURG WASSER WORLD TRIATHLON

LUIS
FRA
Hayden Wilde
NZL
1:42:22
1:03
Alex Yee
GBR
+1:29
World Triathlon
NTT

Luis crosses the line in eighth place at the 2024 Grand Final in Torremolinos, his last-ever World Triathlon race as a pro

to really try to be there for her, whatever happens on my side. And I actually did the final prep with her, it was important for me to be present and make sure that my non-selection would not impact her. But yeah, she's always had good advice, especially when I'm not sure about my decisions.

220: Just a few words on Georgia's year last year?
VL: Her year has been really good. I mean, she's won the supertri title and she's been back on the podium for the World Series. The Olympics was a bit of a disappointment. She was really ready and fit, I could see that, but you know it's a one-day race. She managed to get on the podium with the team, so she was happy with that. But yeah, overall, her year was a success. She did everything right to come back [from injury] and perform at her best.

220: What lessons has the sport taught you?
VL: That you have to make your own decisions. It's your career and you have to put performance first. When you make a decision, it's not about what a federation will advise you to do or anything because your performance is what matters. For them it's the job that matters. And if tomorrow you're not racing anymore they still get the paycheck, but you won't. So it's really important that you do make decisions that make you happy and make you perform better. You don't have to please people. It's obviously you that has to be happy in your life.

So if I have any advice, to anyone that wants to race short course, it's to make decisions that matter to you and that will impact your performance positively. You have to be selfish sometimes and think about what's best for you, that's important.

> *"I hope I inspired a few people to believe in themselves. I came into the sport as a swimmer. Many people told me I would never be fast enough on the run to make it to the Olympics"*

220: What do you hope your legacy in the sport will be?
VL: I hope I inspired a few people to believe in themselves. I came into the sport as a swimmer. Many, many people, including some at the [French triathlon] federation, told me I would never be fast enough on the run to make it to the Olympics. And if I go, I will only go as a pilot. It was good to prove them wrong.

220: What's your proudest achievement in the sport?
VL: My two world titles for sure. It was really nice to win them back to back in 2019 and 2020. I also really liked winning the supertri races. It was a great format and we were really well taken care of. The athletes are really involved in the process.

220: What's the one race that stands out to you in your career and why?
VL: The Grand Final in Gold Coast in 2018. I could feel that I was really fit and I decided to spend seven weeks at altitude in Flagstaff when other people were racing in Montreal, I think. I decided to pass and really focus and prepare for the Grand Final. Every session was going really, really well and I was happy I delivered because ▶

VINCENT LUIS

Q&A

Luis leads the peloton at the final race of the 2024 supertri series in NEOM, Saudi Arabia, his last-ever, pro short-course race

something can always happen. I was just flying and nothing could stop me from getting that win.

220: Who are you excited to watch in 2025?
VL: Yeah, I want to see who is stacking up in the short-course racing. I know Alex [Yee] wants to do a bit more running and Hayden [Wilde] is going to get tempted by middle-distance. So yeah, it'll be interesting. And for long course, Marten Van Riel is the new big dog for the T100, so that'll be fun to watch.

220: What are your plans now, post-season?
VL: Well we still have a race to go in Bahrain [29 November, which both Luis and Taylor-Brown would win]. That will be my first 70.3 for over two years [Luis won the 2022 race]! I've been training hard in Dubai, adapting to the heat and to the time-trial position and everything. And then after that Georgia and I will go to Brazil for two weeks. My sister lives there and I will get to see my two nieces, so it'll be great to spend a bit of time with them. And then it's Girona for Christmas.

220: Do you have a race plan for 2025?
VL: I haven't any confirmations as yet but I would definitely like to race the T100. I was here in Dubai to watch it, and that was amazing. I think I can actually be an X factor in this type of racing. So, yeah, I'm keeping my fingers crossed to get a wild card for next year. I would also like to do a full-distance race. My dad did Roth as his first full distance so if I can continue the legacy and do Roth as my first that would be amazing.

220: What are you most looking forward to about the switch up in distance?
VL: It's a new challenge, new equipment, and I'm quite nerdy. So I'll be happy to try a few things, see if I get things right. And also, you know, meeting new people, and going to new destinations – I raced the World Series in Yokohama for the past 10 years so I'm a bit bored of racing there now! I love Japan, but I've been there so many times. So yeah, having new races, new people to race, a new format and being on the learning curve, it's always exciting. And also having a lot more freedom in picking stuff, like the race suits or the sponsors or the hotels, there's a lot more freedom now. Obviously it comes with a cost because now nothing is covered by the federation, but at least I have a hundred percent control in what I want to do and who I want to work with. So that's really good.

New challenge

Luis has raced short-course for over two decades, so how will his training change with the switch in distance?

Volume and swim
"In terms of total volume you can't really train much more. I train 30 to 32 hours every week, but I will definitely swim less. I will go from 25K a week to maybe 20."

Bike
"I'll probably do 14-16hrs a week but with different sessions. Less technical or crit sessions and a bit more time spent in the TT position and at threshold."

Run
"I'll have to ease up on the pace. There's no more need to run at 2:50 or 2:55 per K now, but we'll have to improve our threshold and make sure I feel really easy around 3:10."

Location and crew
"I'll stay in Girona.. I really like it there. I have the perfect conditions for training. I'll go on camps, most likely at the end of January, early February, and maybe another one in March and April. I'll keep being coached by Joel Filliol. It's been amazing for the past seven years now. It's a new challenge for us, he's coached a few long-distance athletes, but I think he has more skin in the game now and it will be an interesting challenge for him too."

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TTP435

A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Dear reader,

Need some training and racing inspiration? Or fancy signing up for your first race in 2025? Whatever your targets, our one goal here at ***220 Triathlon*** magazine is to make sure you achieve them. In every issue we bring you the best training and racing advice, as well as all the cutting-edge kit you need to perform at your optimum. And, for a limited time you can try your first six issues for just £19.97!

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Helen

Helen Webster, Editor

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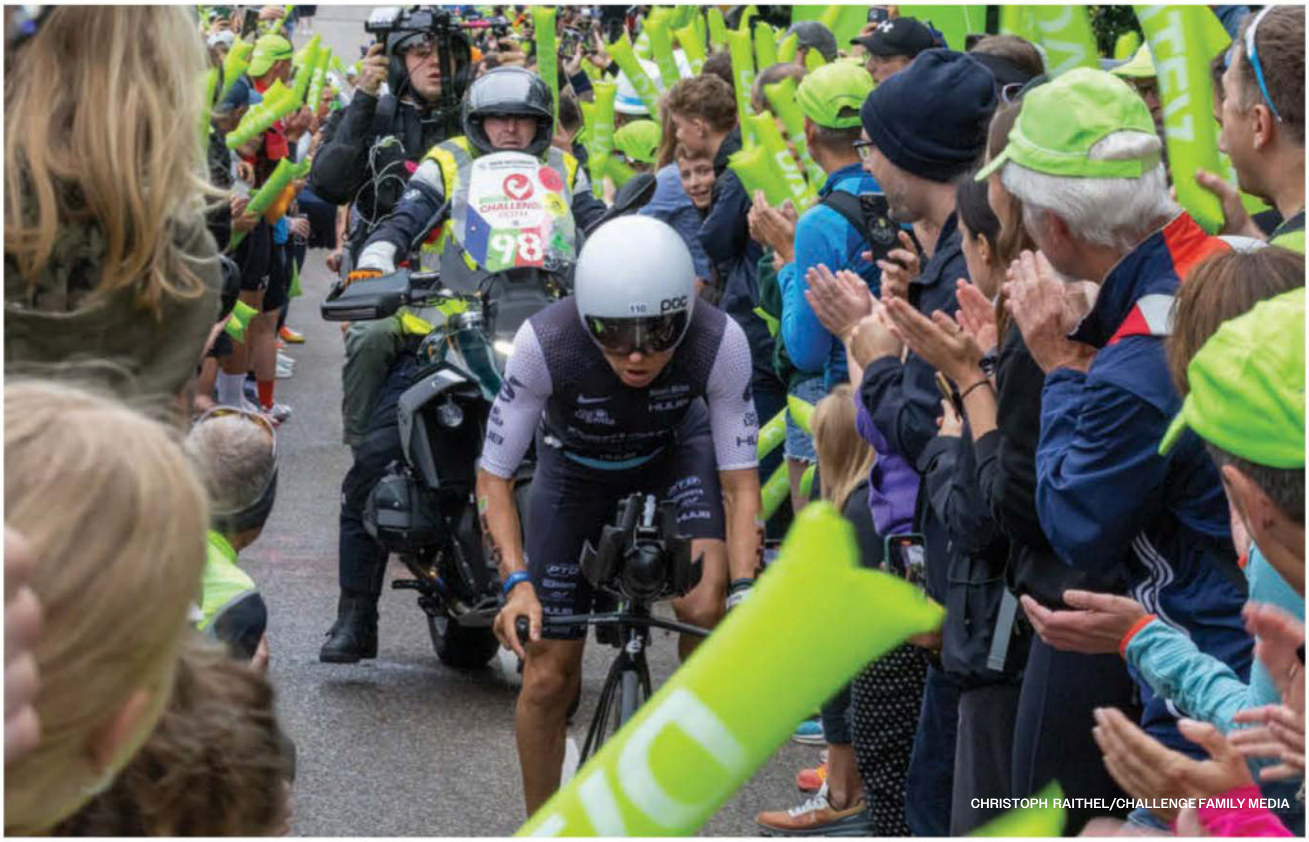
PARIS 2024
PARIS 2024

THE BEST TRI MOMENTS OF 2024

Oof! What an incredible 12 months for multisport on the global stage. And to celebrate such a vintage pro year, we've picked, what we think, are the best racing moments. So sit back and get ready to feel inspired for the new year ahead…

CAPTIONS LIZ BARRETT **IMAGE CREDITS** WAGNER ARAUJO/WORLD TRIATHLON

Women's Olympic Triathlon, 31 July. Paris, France. And the 2024 Paris Olympic triathlon events are, finally, off! The 'will they, won't they' game had the global tri community hooked for several days at the end of July, but when the women's Olympic triathlon got the green light, the viewing public was rewarded with some of the most iconic moments in sporting history.



CHRISTOPH RAITHEL/CHALLENGE FAMILY MEDIA

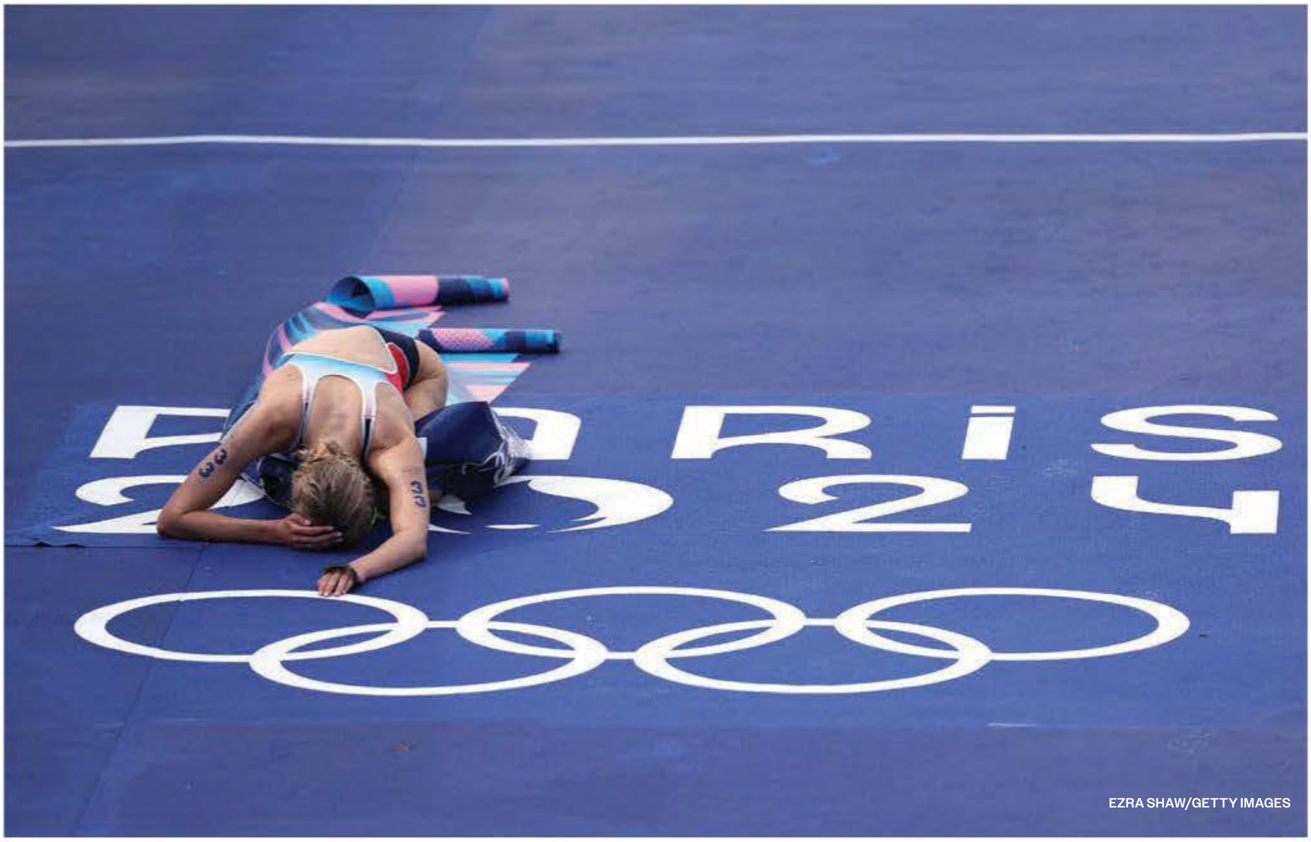
CHRISTOPH RAITHEL/CHALLENGE FAMILY MEDIA

▲ Challenge Roth, 7 July. Roth, Germany. 2019 Ironman world champion Anne Haug is one of the sport's finest female triathletes, and this year, aged 41, rocked up to Roth, collected her third victory and also broke Daniela Ryf's world long-course record, from just last year, by almost 6mins with a time of 8:02:38. The crowds went wild for their homegrown hero.

◀ Challenge Roth, 7 July. Roth, Germany. Two words best sum up the legendary race that is Challenge Roth – fast and fun. This image clearly represents the latter, the small German town's unique finish-line arena where records are celebrated to a Eurodance thrum and strobe lighting. In its 22-year history, Roth has witnessed some of the greatest feats in endurance racing, including two new world long-distance records.

Miami T100, 10 March. Miami, USA. The much-hyped T100 race series made its debut at the iconic Homestead-Miami Speedway back in March, marking the start of what would be the busiest pro season in history. The series attracted the biggest names in tri and the biggest prizes as it travelled across the globe to seven landmark locations.

THAT CAMERAMAN/T100



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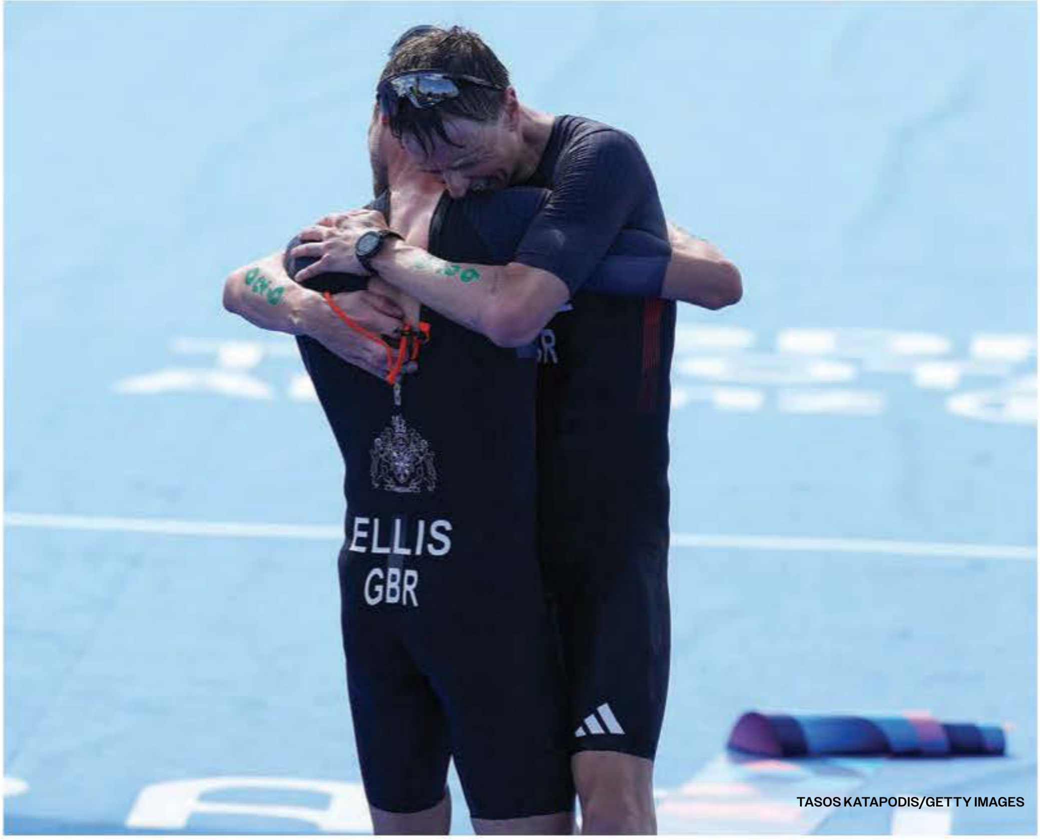


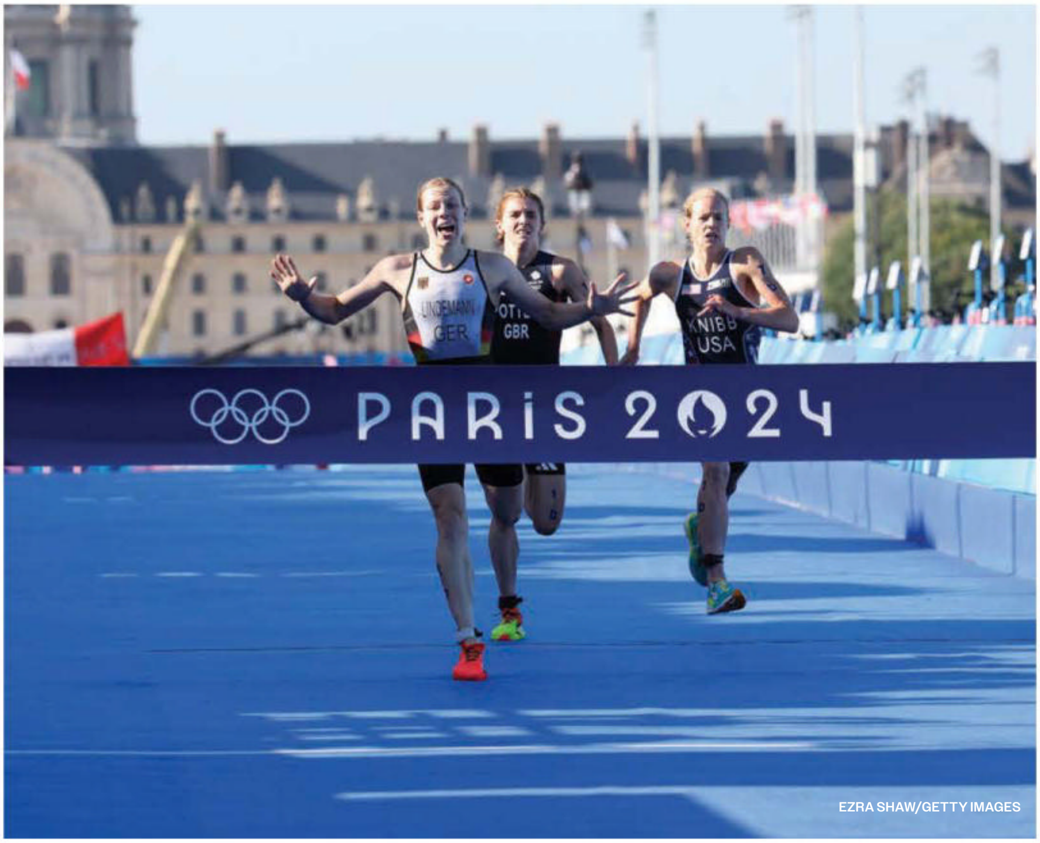
TASOS KATAPODIS/GETTY IMAGES

▲ Women's Olympic Triathlon, 31 July. Paris, France. We printed this beautiful image of the newly-crowned Olympic champion Cassandre Beaugrand back in issue 434 for our Olympic pictorial. But it deserved a reprint as it perfectly portrays the culmination of years of hard graft and sacrifice, as well as the deep respect and passion the elites have

◀ Paralympic Paratriathlon, 2 September. Paris, France. Again, we printed an image of PTVI paratriathlete Dave Ellis and his guide Luke Pollard in our Paralympic pictorial in issue 435, but their victory over the Paris cobbles needs to be celebrated once more, such was the magnitude of their performance. The six-time world and five-time European champion suffered a race-destroying mechanical in Tokyo, so

▶ Olympic Mixed Team Relay, 5 August. Paris, France. The mixed team relay event in Paris provided what every viewer hopes for when they watch elite sport – a photo finish. Here, Germany's Laura Lindemann is first to the tape for a clear, but still close, gold. GB's Beth Potter was initially named runner-up, before a photo review reversed the decision and Taylor Knibb was upgraded.

▼ Men's Olympic Triathlon, 31 July. Paris, France. Who really needs words when this image exists? A photograph that while not printed in these pages before has come to define the true meaning of 'Olympic spirit'. Silver-medallist Hayden Wilde places his arm around his friend and chief rival Alex Yee, who just moments earlier had passed the Kiwi to snatch gold in what could rival the infamous 'Iron War'.



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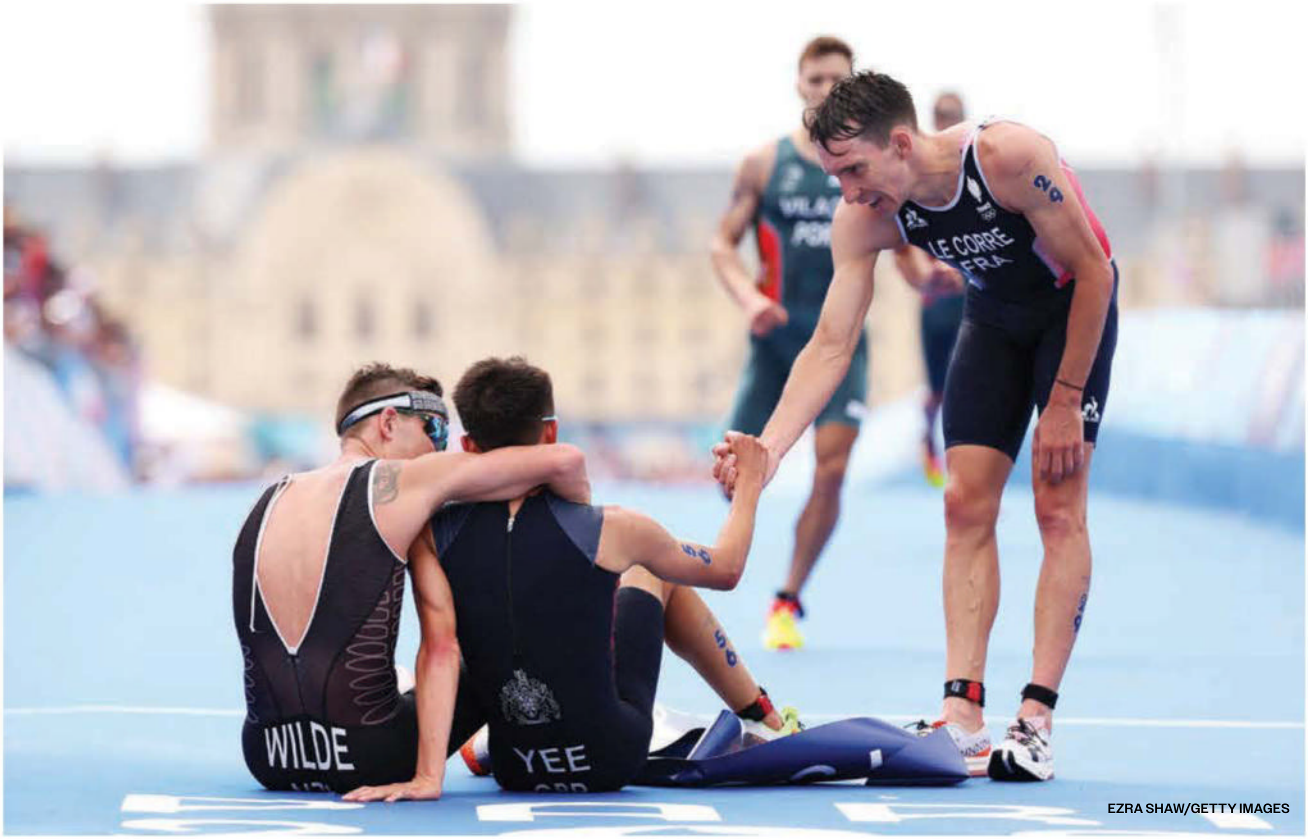

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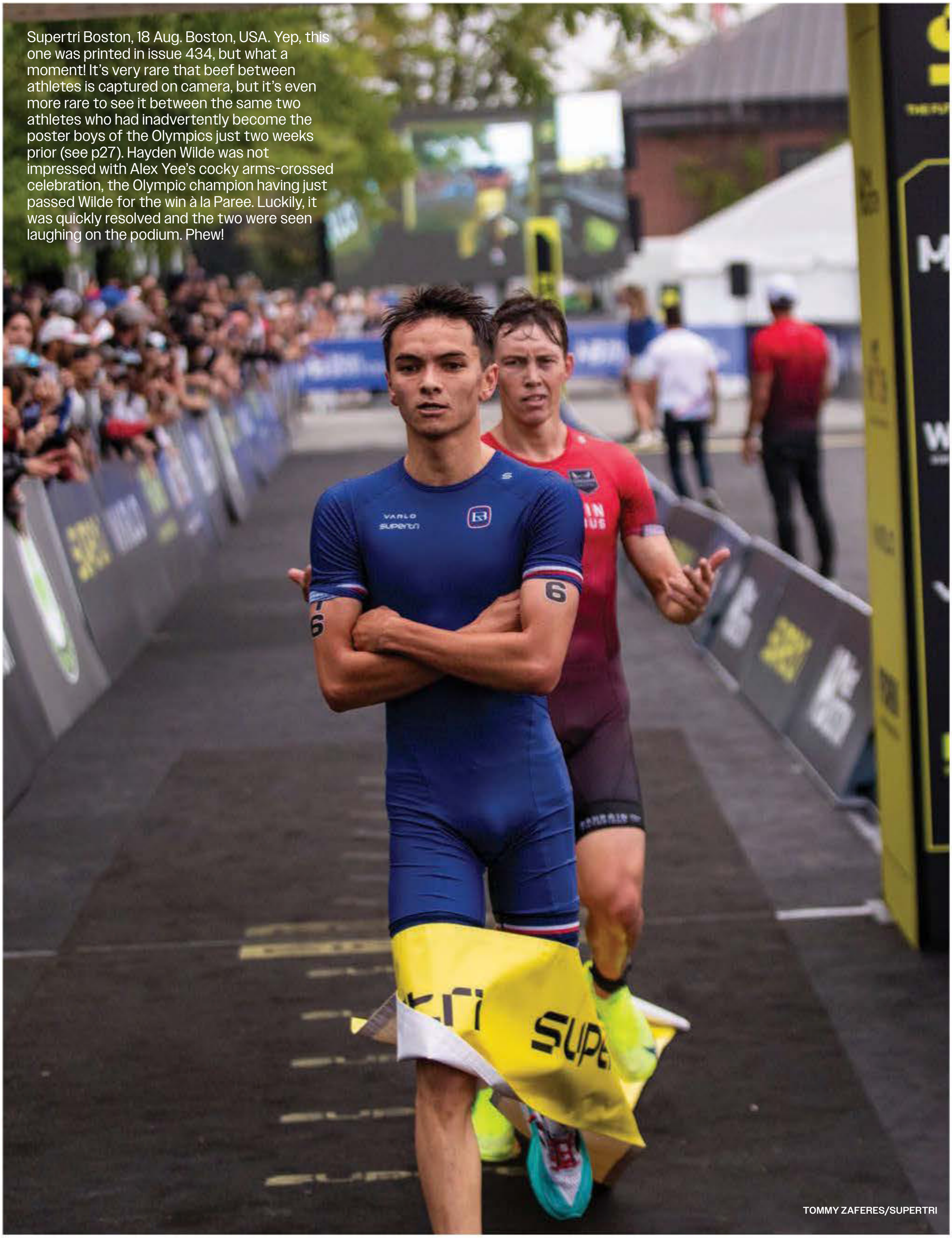

Supertri Boston, 18 Aug. Boston, USA. Yep, this one was printed in issue 434, but what a moment! It's very rare that beef between athletes is captured on camera, but it's even more rare to see it between the same two athletes who had inadvertently become the poster boys of the Olympics just two weeks prior (see p27). Hayden Wilde was not impressed with Alex Yee's cocky arms-crossed celebration, the Olympic champion having just passed Wilde for the win à la Paree. Luckily, it was quickly resolved and the two were seen laughing on the podium. Phew!

TOMMY ZAFERES/SUPERTRI

▶ Ironman Women's World Champs, 22 September. Nice, France. The French Riviera capital hosted the first Ironman Worlds outside of Hawaii in 2023, when the men's champs took place. In 2024, it was the women's turn in the new split-location format, a decision that still divides the tri community. But the elites seem to love it, mainly because the two courses are both brutal. Germany's Laura Philipp won in 8:45:15.

▼ Xterra World Champs, 25 September. Trentino, Italy. The global off-road travelling circus that is Xterra culminated in Trentino, Italy, at the end of September. The world championship race, which used to take place in Maui, Hawaii, switched to the northern Italian province in 2022, and, as is characteristic of all Xterra races, provides a breathtaking backdrop to the muddy mayhem that usually ensues.

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XTERRA MEDIA

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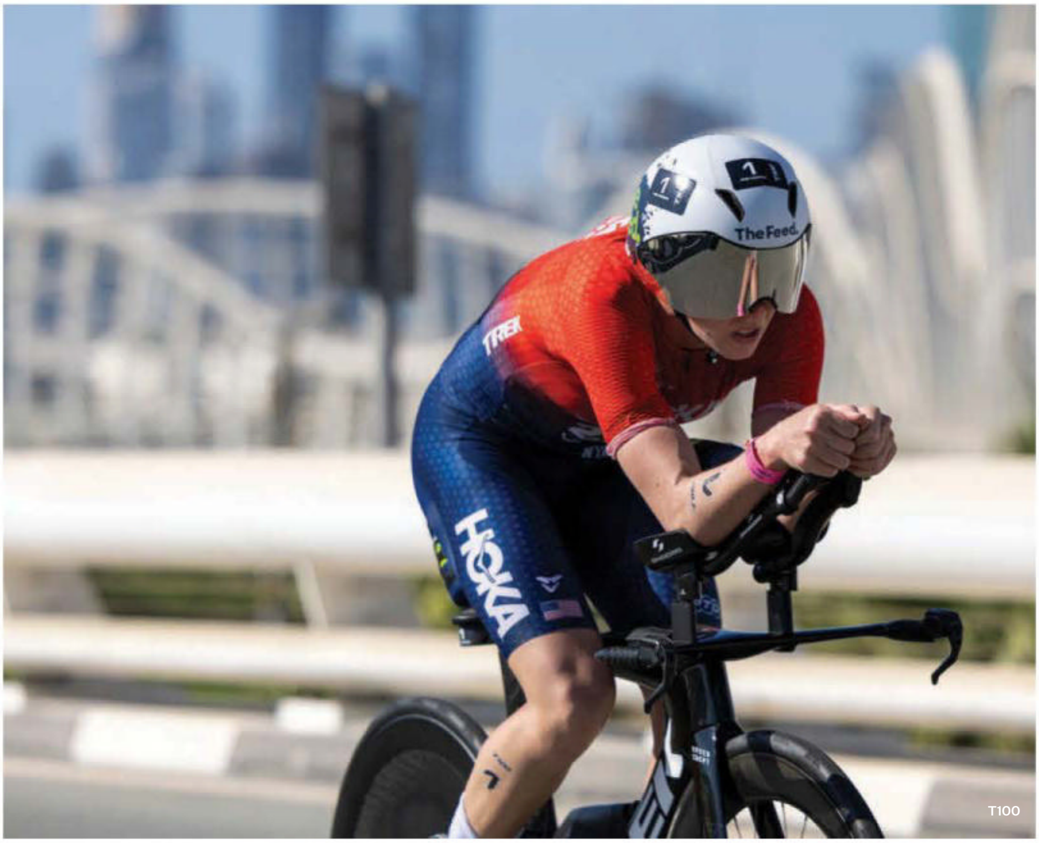
▲ Ironman Men's World Champs, 26 October. Kona, Hawaii. Germany's Patrick Lange last won the Ironman world title in 2018, but started the 2024 event as one of the race's, admittedly, many favourites. Even Lange, who also won in 2017, expected it to be "the closest Kona ever". As it transpired, Lange would smash the course record in 7:35:53.

◀ Ironman Men's World Champs, 26 October. Kona, Hawaii. Twenty-five-year-old Billy Monger was the young broadcaster, racing driver and double amputee racing Kona for the first time, but he'd set himself the dual goal of beating not only the cut-off time of 17hrs, but also the double-amputee record of 16:25hrs. Plus, he was under the media spotlight racing for Comic Relief. His finish time? 14:23:56.

▶ Dubai T100, 16 November. Dubai, UAE. We couldn't round up the year without singling out the US powerhouse that is Taylor Knibb. Here she's en route to winning her fourth T100 race from four starts, that would see her crowned the undisputed champion of the inaugural series. In between bossing the 100K, the 26-year-old also collected her second Olympic medal,

▼ World Triathlon Championship Series Grand Final, 20 October. Torremolinos, Spain. Short-course legend Vincent Luis bids an emotional farewell to his legions of fans. The two-time world and supertri champion made the decision to hang up his Olympic-distance tri-suit at the end of 2024, a year that saw him fail in his bid to make his fourth Olympic Games. (See p16 for more from Luis.)



T100

LUIS
FRA
SFERiS
BAHRAIN VICTORIOUS

WAGNER AROUJO/WORLD TRIATHLON

2025'S GREATEST RACES... AND HOW YOU CAN CONQUER THEM!

Major new races and familiar classics will combine in 2025 to create an unforgettable triathlon season. Here we highlight some of the biggest and best events, and offer winning advice to see you cross that finish line in style.

WORDS MATT BAIRD

CASTLE RACE SERIES: BELVOIR

Location Belvoir Castle, Leicestershire
Distances Multiple
Date 19-20 July 2025, *castleraceseries.com*

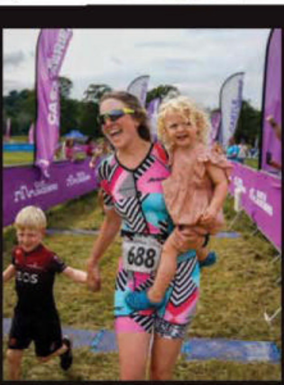
The Castle Race Series will host its second running of the Belvoir Castle Triathlon and Multisport Festival in July on the Leicestershire estate. Over to Fran Watson of the CRS team…

"Arrive 75 minutes before your start time. Bikes can be racked in the transition area an hour before the race begins. Saturday features the shorter adult races, while Sunday hosts longer events, duathlons, an aquabike, aquathlons, and the Run Series. Junior races run each afternoon.

"With a lapped course that keeps swimmers close to the banks, the swim is ideal for newcomers to open-water swimming. The 45km bike course has 287m of elevation gain and takes in a stiff climb to the Belvoir Edge and combines wide, well-maintained country roads into a fast-paced yet challenging course.

"The 10.5 km run includes 187m of elevation, with a steep climb up Blackberry Hill and a technical descent into Frog Hollow. Trail shoes are recommended due to the varied terrain." ▸

CASTLE TRI SERIES



XTRI: THE RESTLESS

Location Arrochar Alps, Scotland
Distance 1.8km swim/50km gravel ride/25km trail run
Date 23 August 2025, *xtriworldtour.com*

New from the Xtri organisers of Celtman and Norseman fame comes The Restless, a unique gravel triathlon set in the Arrochar Alps north-west of Glasgow. Here's Triathlonworkx coach Alan Cardwell on what you can expect in the Grampian Mountains come August…

"Even in August, the water temperature in the deep Loch Goil will still be chilly and, at the Carrick Castle end, it opens up to sea-like conditions. Acclimatise in cold water and experience swimming in choppy conditions ahead of the race.

"The 50km bike course is designed specifically for gravel bikes and is, in the main, fast and flowing. It is super hilly, though, so make sure your training includes steep inclines and that your legs are strong enough for the nearly 2,000m of elevation gain. There's a section of rocky and steep singletrack that only a few athletes will manage to ride. So, practice your mounts, dismounts and some cyclo-cross-style carries before the race.

"The run, with 1,200m of ascent over the 25km, is a classic Scottish hill run that goes relentlessly uphill to the peak of Ben Donich. The key thing, however, is the descent on tired legs, so practice your downhill skills as these will not only save you time, but keep you safe."

1,200M
ELEVATION GAIN ON THE 25KM MOUNTAIN RUN

XTRI

SHORTER EVENTS

CHALLENGE GRAN CANARIA

Location Gran Canaria, Canary Islands, Spain
Distance Olympic. Middle
Date 26 April 2025, *challengefamily.com*
This Canary Island-set event has become a regular early season marker of race fitness for both age-groupers and pros alike over the last decade. The sheltered swim course and flat run leg shouldn't pose too many problems, although it can be hot on the latter, but it's the bike course that'll test your race prowess with multiple rolling climbs.

MUMBLES TRIATHLON

Location Mumbles, Gower
Distances Sprint; Olympic; Middle
Date 10 May 2025, *mumblestri.com*
This Ocean Lava-branded race is one of the first major open-water events of the UK season and regularly draws hundreds of racers to the gorgeous Gower peninsula. The waters of Swansea Bay will be chilly in early May, but it's visibility from the rising sun that can cause problems for swimmers on the two-lap middle-distance course. Bring goggles with tinted lenses!

49.9KM
LENGTH OF THE EXTENDED RUN LEG

SLATEMAN

SLATEMAN ULTRA

Location Llanberis, Eryri **Distance** 3.8km swim/180km bike/44.5 or 49.9km trail run **Date** 8 June 2025, *alwaysaimhighevents.com*

One of the big new race launches of 2025 is the Slateman Ultra. The race is like a mashup of the existing, shorter Slateman events on the same day and the late Brutal events, with the run leg of the longest option venturing up to the summit of Yr Wyddfa (Snowdon) before a leg-shaking descent back to the lakeside finish line. Over to race director Brian Corcoran for their Ultra tips…

“Try to maintain your cold-water acclimatisation throughout the winter. Occasional short cold water dips are worth their weight on gold when you get to open-water swim season. When you start your specificity block of training, think about incorporating very hilly sections into your brick runs. The quarry lap and Llanberis Path both have sections where a fast power walk is the optimal strategy. Speed agility quickness training will help develop the cadence required for an efficient power walk.

“Get your race day nutrition dialled in. It’s going to be a long day and gels alone aren’t going to cut it. Try ‘real’ food as much as possible and stay away from sweet foodstuffs for as long as possible. Peanut butter sandwiches, (veggie or otherwise) sausage rolls, dried fruit and nuts, falafel and hummus… are all great options that you’ll look forward to eating.

“Off-road trail shoes are a must. The run’s quarry section is a combination of hard-packed stony trails with muddy sections. A good all-round shoe with a rock plate and good ankle support is required. You can use lightweight running/hiking poles, too.

The weather both in Llanberis and on the summit can be wildly different. Make sure that you consider the ‘feels like’ temperature. Putting a dry layer on your top half before you start the mountain lap will help you regulate your body temp.

“Take a trip to North Wales to familiarise yourself with the bike course, the quarry run section and the Llanberis Path. It’ll be a good chance to know what to expect and experiment with hiking poles, your nutrition, bike set up etc.”

WINDSOR TRIATHLON

Location Windsor, Berkshire
Distances Sprint and Olympic
Date 15 June 2025, *royalwindsortriathlon.co.uk*

Set your alarm early for the notoriously early start of the Windsor Triathlon. Once you’re into the Thames for the swim, swim the downstream leg nearer the middle of the river and move closer to the side on the upstream return to make the most of the easterly river flow. And save some energy for the sneaky climb on Castle Hill on the run leg!

UK ULTIMATE TRIATHLON

Location Ellesmere, Shropshire
Distances 3.8km swim/180km bike/42.2km run
Date 29 June 2025, *uktriathlon.co.uk*

There’s little shade on the lakeside run course on this bargain Iron-distance race, so bring a cap and don’t forget the sun cream. The largely flat bike course is aerobar-friendly, so spend plenty of time honing your aero position and readying your body for the challenge before the race, both on the turbo and out on the open roads.

IRONMAN LEEDS

Location Leeds, Yorkshire
Distance 3.8km swim/180km bike/42.2km run
Date 27 July 2025, *ironman.com*

The big new M-Dot launch in 2025 is Ironman Leeds in Yorkshire in July. Here's Race Director for IRONMAN Leeds, Lewis Peacock, on how to prep for the debut Ironman in God's Own Country…

"The key to making the most out of your Ironman Leeds weekend is to plan ahead, allow your focus to be on the race by knowing where you need to be and at what time. As an athlete you will need to attend registration on either the Friday or the Saturday as bike and transition bags can be racked on the Saturday only.

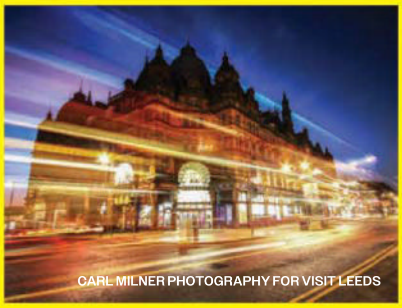
"There's a lot to think about for race day. Have a race plan prepared and a specific nutrition plan in place that you're confident will provide you with the correct amount of energy to get you through your day. Keep an eye on the weekly weather forecast and plan accordingly – make use of your blue, red and on-course personal needs bags to add any extra clothing, nutrition and equipment. Transition will open 90mins before race start.

"Kicking off your Leeds journey will be a self-seeded rolling start into the calm waters of Waterloo Lake in Roundhay Park. Keep calm, find your rhythm and control your breathing especially for the first few hundred metres. The full bike course will be released shortly, but anyone who has cycled in and around the area before will know to expect spectacular scenery and fantastic riding (top tip: hilly training rides are advised!).

"The run course will be disclosed shortly but know that has a bit of everything. It'll be a spectator's dream, offering your friends and family multiple locations to see you before concluding your run on the iconic red carpet of the inaugural Ironman Leeds."

GETTY IMAGES FOR IRONMAN

CARL MILNER PHOTOGRAPHY FOR VISIT LEEDS


CARL MILNER PHOTOGRAPHY FOR VISIT LEEDS

JACK SCHOFIELD FOR IRONMAN

226KM
THE CLASSIC IRONMAN DISTANCE

SHORTER EVENTS

CHALLENGE ROTH

Location Roth, Bavaria
Distance 3.8km swim/180km bike/42.2km run
Date 6 July 2025, *challengefamily.com*

"Roth isn't a flat ride, but it's fast with a mix of steady climbs followed by quick descents," says age-grouper Tom van Rossum. "With the cheering crowd, it'd be easy to light it up on the climbs but keep the pace steady and stick to your power/HR limits. Carving through the crowd up the Solarer Berg was a highlight! Enjoy these moments on the first lap because

SWYD SPRINT TRIATHLON

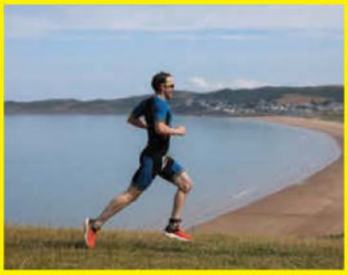
Location Barry Island, South Wales
Distance 750m swim/20km bike/5km run
Date 24 August 2025, *allornothingevents.com*

Both draft-legal and non-drafting races are on offer at this Barry Island beauty. Whichever you pick, the closed road bike leg has little in the way of elevation gain, with fast and flat laps around Barry. Remember to count those laps each time. Also don't forget that registration is the day before.

“Sighting can be challenging in rough sea conditions”

CROYDE OCEAN TRIATHLON

360 MILLION
AGE OF CROYDE'S DEVONIAN PERIOD COASTLINE



CROYDE OCEAN TRIATHLON

Location Putsborough, Devon
Distance 1.5km sea swim/37km bike ride/12km trail run
Date 6 July 2025, *croydeocean.co.uk*

Here's race director Jo Hibberd on how to navigate the challenges posed by this epic Olympic-distance race on the stunning North Devon coast.

“The Croyde Ocean Triathlon starts with a swim in the Atlantic at Putsborough Sands. Get in the ocean or at least open water as soon as the water is warm enough. Sighting can be a challenge if conditions are bumpy so nailing your technique can make a huge difference. As for the mass swim start, take your time and let the big guns sprint it out. Post-swim you'll have to tackle a steep climb to the grassy transition zone. Walk it to save your legs! Many opt to leave beach shoes at the bottom of the hill.

“The bike route is hilly and technical. The winding Devon lanes, high hedges and tight turns mean you must concentrate every second of the ride. Look out for the ford at the start.

“On the trail run the climbs are steep in places. The hardest climb is around 2km into the run – many decide to power-walk here. There's also the Croyde beach section. Most of the sand is hard but there's a soft and energy-sapping section at the end. Take the shortest route on the soft sand and ignore the more direct diagonal route.” ▸

BALA TRIATHLON

Location Bala, Snowdonia
Distances Sprint and Olympic
Date 7 September 2025, *alwaysaimhighevents.com*

It may be surrounded by the mountains of Snowdonia, but the long-running Bala Tri is a fast and largely flat affair for both speedsters and beginners. Prepare your soles for walking on rocks on the swim entry and exit, and embark on some cold-water acclimatisation and take a neoprene cap if you struggle with swimming in chilly waters.

HELVELLYN TRIATHLON

Location Helvellyn, Cumbria
Distances 1.5km lake swim/59km bike/15km run
Date 7 September 2025, *helvellyntriathlon.co.uk*

“Don't overdo the mountain training, just train hard,” says past winner Bonnie Van Wilgenburg on this classic Lake District toughie. “But if you only road run, head to the Lake District to practise some trail running and up and down the mountains on the course. Respect the mountains and the weather on race weekend; the mandatory kit is needed for a reason.”

CHALLENGE FAMILY

SHORTER EVENTS

AVIEMORE TRIATHLON

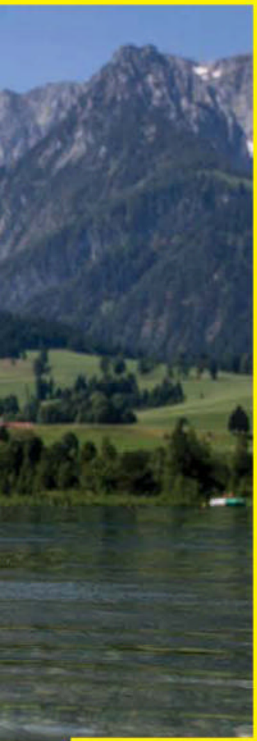
Location Aviemore, Cairngorms
Distances 1km swim/18km MTB 9km trail run
Date 15 September 2025, *durtyevents.com*

For this southern softy at least, the waters of Loch Morlich are bracing, even in late summer, so embark on some cold-water prep before the event and take a neoprene swim hat. The off-road bike leg in Glenmore Forest boasts some technical sections: ready your MTB skills in advance and aim to recce both the bike and run course before race day.

IRONMAN WALES

Location Tenby, Wales
Distance 3.8km swim/180km bike/42.km run
Date 21 September 2025, *ironman.com*

“The steepness of the climbs makes Tenby one of the hardest 180km Ironman courses,” says 39-time Ironman finisher Mark Kleanthous. “There are a few technical sections, especially ‘Heartbreak Hill’ at Saundersfoot. Drive this section before and mentally plan how you’ll tackle it in both the dry and wet. Don’t get sucked in by the crowds; ride within your ability.”



660M

WALCHSEE SITS 660M ABOVE SEA LEVEL

CHALLENGE KAISERWINKL-WALCHSEE

Location Walchsee, Austria
Distance 1.9km swim/90km bike/21.1km run
Date 29 June 2025, *challengefamily.com*

This established event in Austria is one of the major draws on the Challenge Family calendar thanks to the superlative scenery, slick organisation and array of pre- and post-race activities. Here are Victoria Murray-Orr's event tips…

"As Walchsee is 660m above sea level the weather can be changeable – hot and sunny one day and cold and wet the next so it's important to be prepared for all eventualities, as in any alpine environment. Arm sleeves or long-sleeved jersey can be good on the bike if the weather isn't great.

"Lake Walchsee is a sheltered calm lake so preparation can focus on confidence in deep water rather than strong currents or waves. Be prepared for a non-wetsuit swim as the water temperature can get quite warm, depending on the weather. But the alpine climate means it can also be quite chilly so be prepared for all eventualities.

"The bike course has a total elevation of over 1,100m so hill training is a must, as is practicing fast technical descents so you don't lose speed on the downhills. You can familiarise yourself with the course before race day by riding it on [virtual platform] Rouvy. The run around the lake is on a mix of road and off-road surfaces – it looks flat but is deceptively hilly."

"The bike course has an elevation of over 1,100m"

CASTLE RACE SERIES: HEVER

Location Hever, Kent
Distances Multiple
Date 27-28 September 2025, *castleraceseries.com*

The Hever run course is tougher than the elevation profile suggests, with the mixed-terrain route liable to become muddy in places. Take one pair of road shoes and (if you own them) one trail pair with you, study the weather and check the route before deciding what's best to wear. And save some energy for the sharp climb at the end of each lap.

IRONMAN WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

Location Kona, Hawaii (women's)
Distance 3.8km swim/180km bike/42.2km run
Date 11 October 2025, *ironman.com*

"There's a huge buzz for the few days before the race," says experienced coach and athlete Will Newbery, "but don't panic train in a bid to emulate the super athletes when really you should be resting! On paper, the course should be fairly easy, but the heat and humidity adds a whole new dimension. The Queen K is like an oven with no wind.."

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KIT ZONE

THE LATEST GEAR - **TESTED BY EXPERTS**

OGT
Cherry Bakewell
Apple & Cinnamon
Salted Caramel
TIME
COMPRESSPORT

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HELEN WEBSTER

220's editor is also a qualified open-water swimming coach.

ROB SLADE

220's content editor and resident adventure seeker.

MATT BAIRD

Has spent years testing tri kit and accessories for *220*.

JACK SEXTY

A strong age-grouper focusing on top-end gains.

JAMES WITTS

Former *220* editor James specialises in sports science.

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SIMPLY PUT, DON'T BOTHER!	IT'LL DO THE JOB WELL ENOUGH	A DECENT PERFORMER	ONE OF THE BEST YOU CAN BUY	A GENUINE CLASS LEADER

"They use the brand's Direct Pitch technology, which fires sound into your ear canal, rather than using bone conduction"

SHOKZ
SHOKZ

SHOKZ
OPENFIT AIR

£119 ★★★★☆

Unlike many of the headphones in the Shokz range, the OpenFit Air are individual devices that sit on each ear, rather than units connected by a band around the back of the head. They also use the brand's DirectPitch tech rather than bone conduction, which fires the music into your ear canal. This model follows the launch of the standard OpenFits, which I reviewed in 2023. The latter retails at £179.99, while the Air has an RRP of £119.

That's a big saving, yet the duo are rather similar. They both come with a case, which charges the earphones when they're stored inside. That gives you up to 28 hours of playback for both headphones. The standard OpenFits give you up to seven hours on a single charge, while the Airs are just six. Still, that's not a huge difference. Charging time is the same (60mins to charge the earbuds to full and 120mins to charge the case to full).

Comfort is pretty high and is on par with the pricier OpenFits, though I do find the OpenRun range more comfortable, as after several hours you can start to feel a bit of fatigue on top of the ear with these. They fit securely and I've never had any issues with movement when running or moving about. Situational awareness is also decent, though not as good as you get with bone conduction headphones. Sound quality is pretty good, though it'll never compete with in-ear alternatives. What's not so good is the fiddly touch-sensitive controls, though I've never been bothered by having this as a feature.

Ultimately, I'd pick these over the original OpenFits due to the price difference, but I still prefer using my OpenRun Pros – you just don't get a charging case with them! Ultimately, you won't go wrong with either choice, though.

RS *uk.shokz.com*

80%

VERDICT The OpenFit Airs balance key aspects well – great run headphones

ROAD BIKE PEDALS

WITH TWO SETS OF ROAD BIKE PEDALS TO TRY WHICH WILL OUR TESTER GO FOR – THE TOP-END TIMES OR THE MORE BUDGET-FRIENDLY SHIMANOS?

XPRO No.12
TIME

SHIMANO
ULTEGRA

TIME XPRO12SL

£440 ★★★★½

If you're after very light pedals with a very heavy price tag, look no further than the Time Xpro 12 SL. Time's pedal range was revamped in spring 2024, and this is the top-end model with no expense spared: just 88g per pedal (or 123g combined with cleat and bolts),a carbon pedal body, ceramic bearings and a hollow titanium spindle add up to "the ultimate expression of pedal technology" according to Time, and they certainly look the part too.

The titanium spindle and branding are gold and the matte carbon finish looks great, or as aesthetically pleasing as some bike pedals could look anyway. Much like Shimano, Time utilises a simple three-bolt cleat. The patented Iclic cleats offer five degrees of float, but fixed cleats can be purchased separately. Interestingly the cleats are asymmetric and left/right-specific, but if you swap them round it still works and offers a small amount of extra Q factor (distance between the pedals), while you can also purchase the pedals with three different spindle lengths that further affects Q factor.

Time's patented cleat design is"pre-opened", which in practice means that clipping out 'opens' the cleat to make it easier to clip in next time, unlike rivals where nothing happens when you clip out, requiring some extra digging of your foot to reengage. It's remarkably easy and this is the same whether you go for the Xpro 12 SL or the much more affordable Xpro 10 (£160), which is another way of saying you don't need to spend £440 to benefit from Time's nifty pedal engagement system.

The pedalling experience is excellent, feeling super strong, stiff and stable under load when sprinting or tackling big inclines, and no lateral movement occurring that I didn't want. They are spendy, though! **JS** *sram.com*

82 % **VERDICT** Premium ride feel with a very premium price tag

SHIMANO ULTEGRA PD-R8000

£159.99 ★★★★½

The Ultegra PD-R8000 pedals sit below Shimano's top-of-the-range Dura-Ace PD-R9100 (£234.99) and above the dependable 105 PD-R7000 (£124.99) in its road pedal range. Much unlike its discontinued Hollowtech cranksets (it's a long story), Shimano didn't update Dura-Ace or Ultegra pedals when the corresponding groupsets were last updated in2021; and that's probably testament to how good they are.

All Shimano pedals using the SPD-SL cleat system are cross-compatible across all price points and recent generations, so if you're upgrading to Ultegra then cleats from your other Shimano pedals will work fine. In the box you get yellow cleats that offer 6 degrees of' float' (side-to-side movement), but you can get blue cleats with 2 degrees and red ones with no float. I prefer yellow because I find it more comfortable being able to wiggle my feet slightly.

Ultegra pedals each weigh 123g, and a cleat plus bolts and washers weighs 36g, which isonly a few grams more than the very lightest road pedals. The sleek carbon composite pedal body has three steel plates for increased durability, and the axles are steel with well-sealed bearings. You can also get them with 4mm longer axles if you want more Q factor, i.e. the distance between your pedals. Very little–if any–maintenance will need doing for years in my experience, and to fix them to your bike you'll just want to apply a little grease to the axles and tighten with an 8mmAllen key. To fix the cleats to your shoes you just need to tighten up three bolts with a 4mmAllen key, and all modern road shoes are compatible.

Clipping in and out of Shimano pedals is a breeze and I felt connected to the bike. The experience is both comfortable and efficient. **JS** *freewheel.co.uk*

90 % **VERDICT** Bang for buck, still our pedal of choice for road cycling and triathlon.

ONE GOOD THING OAT BARS

£20 for 12 ★★★★☆

Chapeau to OGT for finding a gap in the ultra-competitive and far-reaching sports nutrition market, namely it's wrapper-free. There's a lot of good going on with these conveniently sized bars, but a couple downsides that could do with refinement.

Let's start with the good and that dispensing of wrappers. Rather neatly, these have been replaced with a coating of beeswax. This acts as protection against the elements, albeit you should wash it like an apple of pear before consumption. Because of that wax exterior, they don't turn into mush. As for how they're stored in transit, OGT, which stands for One Good Thing, run a subscription scheme so your 12 bites arrive in recycled cardboard. Neat.

The primary ingredient of each bar is oats, which are cold pressed. This means OGT squash everything together without using any heat that locks in the flavour. Each bar contains between 24g and 25g of mainly slow-releasing carbs so a good option for the bike.

Talking flavour, our preferred option was the chocolate and orange, with cherry bakewell trailing at the back, as it tasted a little synthetic. To be fair, that could have been the beeswax, which takes a little getting used to. But I did get used to it by the end of testing.

The main downside is that those packed oats are a little drier than we'd lik, more moisture would be very welcome. And though we can see why manufacturers do it, we're not huge fans of subscription schemes. **JW** *weareogt.com*

76 % **VERDICT** An interesting launch with a solid idea behind it – just needs a little refinement

PROTEIN
ONE GOOD OGT THING
Salted Caramel
Cherry Bakewell
Apple & Cinnamon

UNDER ARMOUR

UNDER ARMOUR UA VANISH ENERGY

£41 ★★★★☆

It's easy to think of a running top as a non-key purchase. But investing in a performance tee brings benefits such as moisture wicking, breathability and added comfort. This top from Under Armour is certainly comfortable. It's stretchy, fits true-to-size and offers great coverage, unlike some tops, which can ride up. However, it's not the quickest to dry and, while moisture wicking is decent, it's not class leading. I was a little surprised by the price, too, as I expected it to be somewhat cheaper, particularly as I've already seen signs of wear on the fabric after just a couple of months. That said, it hasn't impacted performance. **RS** *underarmour.co.uk*

76 % **VERDICT** Decent, but there's a lot of competition at this price and durability is a concern

COMPRESSPORT

COMPRESSPORT 3D THERMO GLOVES

£45 ★★★★½

Cold hands are the bane of my life in winter so new gloves are always welcome. These are expensive, but the S/M fit was great even on my small hands and they didn't stretch out of shape. In fact, due the thermo-regulating fabric it was easy to forget they were there. 'Contact yarn' tips meant I could operate my phone **HW** *compressport.com*

86 % **VERDICT** Really nice gloves, albeit a luxury purchase at that price point

GETTY IMAGES

BUYER'S GUIDE:

TRAIL RUNNING SHOES

Slipping about this winter? You need a decent pair of trail shoes...

WORDS AND SHOE PICS JUDE PALMER, JAMES WITTS, HELEN WEBSTER, ROB SLADE

The benefits of trail running for triathletes are huge, from building core strength to technique gains and, ultimately, pure off-season enjoyment. Trail running shoes can make going off-road a more enjoyable and beneficial experience, so we've rounded up and reviewed some of the best options on the market for men and women.

But what makes for decent trail shoes? Well, a breathable upper for a start. This is key because lightweight material also aids drainage come the muddy and wet off-season. Traction is also vital for staying the right way up come field or fell. Lugs come in varying sizes and depths, so select to suit your intended terrain types, from tow paths to ragged mountain routes.

Good stability is also needed to avoid any issues on technical terrain, while the amount of cushioning and propulsion you want will often depend on personal preferences, though will impact how and when you'll use the shoes. Now, on with the testing. ▸

WOMEN'S SHOES

220 TRIATHLON
BEST ON TEST

SALOMON GENESIS £140

★★★★★

salomon.com

If you want a feature-packed shoe that is wearable straight out of the box, the Salomon Genesis is it. This is a shoe that deserves to be quietly confident as it combines cushioning with the responsiveness many look for in a trail shoe and a lot more. The sort of shoe that gets the job done without the fuss – you can put the Genesis on and go running in less time than it takes to get them out of the box.

In the past I have had a love-hate relationship with Salomon shoes. For years I wished I could wear them, but my feet could not handle the narrowness of the popular Speedcross. I went up a half size and testing the Genesis with its wider fit has been a revelation.

They have a refreshing amount of room in the toe box allowing my toes to wiggle and a good instep height. This means not only was I comfortable on longer runs but also means my foot biomechanics can do the thing evolution has designed them to do. It also means they are easy to get on and off, ideal for off-road triathlons and anyone who does not want any extra faff stopping them leave the house for a run.

With a woven Matryx upper that is breathable and durable, the Genesis can withstand the mud and dirt of UK winter trails and a decent toe bumper offers protection from stubbed toes.

The All Terrain Contagrip outsole is built for a wide variety of surface and the 4mm depth lugs on the outside and 5mm towards the centre excelled on trails that were drier and rockier in nature. Whilst it performed well in the odd bit of mud, if I was expecting a hilly mud fest I would reach for a shoe with greater grip.

A stack height of 34mm at the heel and 26mm at the forefront means a drop of 8mm and a good level of cushioning comes from Salomon's Energy Foam, with the shoe weighing in at 242g for my UK6. At the same time there is enough flex in the sole to rock up on to the toes for up hills and the shoe feels responsive on more technical trails. The Genesis feels soft to run in. A padded heel counter and tongue adds to the level of comfort especially on longer runs.

The Genesis features the Salomon lock style laces making lacing super-easy and quick and avoids my absolute bug bear of lacing, even when double knotted, undoing mid-run. (Hear this other brands – laces are basic – you need to test them). The Quick Lacing locks down the foot making them very stable running hills and can easily be adjusted on the go. A lace garage can be used to tidy away excess lace which is a nice touch.

If you are looking for a reliable, unfussy trail shoe that performs, the Genesis is it. A Goretex version is also available. **JP**

95 %

VERDICT Comfortable and trail-happy shoe which suits wider feet. Some nice features, including the laces

LA SPORTIVA
LEVANTE £187

★★★★★

lasportiva.com

Designed specifically for women, the Levante is a gem of a shoe with great trail specific features such as a protective tow bumper, lace garage and a great balance between cushioning and responsiveness. With performance in mind, the Levante certainly feels fast with its snug fit and light weight feel (210g for a UK5). The standout feature is the integrated ankle cuff which keeps dirt out of the shoe, a real bonus for wet winter running. I did find getting the shoe on trickier to start with and a heel loop would be appreciated but after a few wears this became easier. The Levante felt really responsive especially on the uphill as my feet were able to flex onto my toes with ease. The toe box felt roomy enough for my toes to wiggle and the shape of the shoe/gaiter means my ankle felt held on steep descents. There is plenty of grip. **JP**

93 %

VERDICT Loved the female-specific fit and the ankle cuff. Some nicely considered trail features here

220 TRIATHLON
HIGHLY RATED

ALTRA
TIMP 5 £135

★★★★½

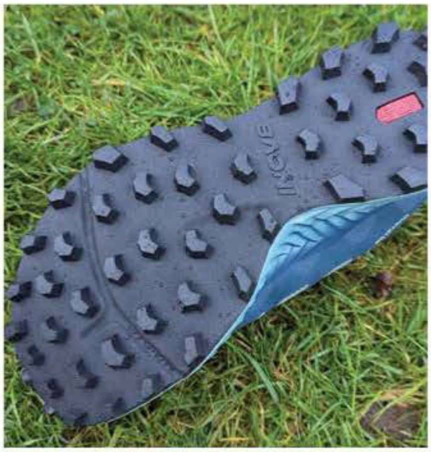
altrarunning.eu

If you love a zero-drop trail shoe with masses of wriggle room in the toe box to let your wonderful biomechanics do their thing, the Altra Timp 5 is for you. I loved the look of this shoe with its bright fun vibe and it has a lot to offer in terms of cushioning for those longer runs as well as responsiveness for shorter faster runs. Whilst it is broad across the toes I found it to be tight in the midstep although this did loosen over time. My UK5 came in at 269g. The gaiter hook and heel Velcro are welcome additional features commonly found with Altra shoes which gives them a little more versatility. If you are wanting to transition from shoes with more traditional drops of 5 to 8mm then take your time to wear the Timp 5 in however, otherwise your Achilles won't thank you. The Vibram soles offer great grip on all but the muddiest of trails. **JP**

85 %

VERDICT Love the bright colours and the run experience. Take it steady with the zero drop if you're new to it.

WOMEN'S SHOES



INOV8 MUDTALON £120

★★★★★

inov8.com

During the gear testing period for this issue I'd started training for a race called the 'Doynton Hard Half' which runs locally each February. The point? It's so famed for being a mudfest that the last time I did it they gave competitors a nailbrush – and it was very much needed!

This in mind, I've been seeking out the muddiest, wettest trails this month and my usual trail shoes of choice – the Hoka Speedgoats – just wen't up to the job. Enter the Mudtalons though and it was a different story. The key story here is those grippy soles with their 8mm 'talons' with a shape inspired by goats' hooves.

In testing I found a could run confidently at my usual pace through sticky mud and clay and the Inov8s gave me enough grip that I wasn't slipping. The brand claim the shape of the studs released mud quickly too and I found that to be true on my runs. There's nothing worse than clagged-up shoes that no longer do their job! They also performed well on wet grass and spongy terrain, so would be recommended for fell running too.

One downside I've found historically with studded trail shoes is that they are slippy on concrete – happily this wasn't the case with the Mudtalons as the sole is also designed to stick to wet rock. I haven't raced in swimrun for a few years now, but it did strike me that if I ever make it back to Sweden for the ÖtillÖ races again, these would be perfect for the unique mix of mud and rocks!

Overall, these were a very roomy shoe. I've previously found Inov8 shoes to be a bit narrow for me and have sized up. Here there's a choice of Precision Fit and Wide Fit and a new anatomical shape to boot. Given that I could have sized down to my usual UK6 rather than the UK7 I tested here as they were a little big and it felt like there was quite a bit of upper creasing across my feet as I ran. That said they were still secure though and even when mud-plugging I didn't feel any lift of the heel cup. That was likely helped by Inov8's "Met-Cradle" design which uses thick overlap strips to connect the lacing system to the back of the shoe.

At 265g the shoes felt light and a tough upper made of ballistic nylon felt like it would survive the rigours of tough winter training.

Inov8 say these shoes have a slightly thicker midsole to give more bounce than the more racey Mudtalon Speed. Used to Hokas though and despite the 6mm drop I did feel these quite a firm ride. Not such a problem on very soft ground as the mud and grass gives plenty of cushioning, but on short stretches of tarmac on my long run routes they did feel pretty firm.

The women's version comes in blue or black. Men get three options. **HW**

90 %

VERDICT Pretty near perfect for soft mud and sticky, waterlogged trails. Good to see a wide-fit option too

DYNAFIT
ULTRA 100 £160

★★★★☆

dynafit.com

Promoted as an ultra-distance shoe the Dynafit Ultra 100 certainly has plenty of cushioning in the sole and the grip to cope with all sorts of different trail conditions that we tested. With a stack height of 30mm and 6mm drop and a padded heel cushion and tongue, the Ultra 100 offers comfort on longer runs but perhaps not the responsiveness on more technical trails. On its website, Dynafit recommends sizing down two sizes which seemed a little unusual so maybe check before ordering. In fact, the opposite was true as I needed to wear a shoe two sizes bigger than my normal so that I could get the right width in what is a pointy toe box. This made the shoe feel overly long. The stretch lace cover towards the bottom of the tongue is a great place to stash laces but I found it made adjusting the laces harder. **JP**

75 %

VERDICT Cushioned shoe that offers comfort but lacks responsiveness. Sizing very narrow.

ARC'TERYX
SYLAN £180

★★★★☆

arcteryx.com

The Sylan sets itself apart from most other trail shoes with its rocker profile, a feature I have seen migrate over from road shoes. The shape of the bottom of the shoe encourages my feet to rock to the toe which made running feel easier and more efficient. On flatter less technical trails I felt faster. The downside is that this made the shoe feel stiffer in the sole and less responsive if you are the sort of runner who likes to feel the trail. The upside of the relatively high stack height of 28mm/23mm is great cushioning but is this to the detriment of weight with my UK5 coming in at 292g. The knitted ankle sleeve is a real bonus to keep out debris and a really useful pocket on the tongue for stashing laces. It feels true to size and has a fairly wide toe box although at the end of longer runs I felt some midfoot tightness. **JP**

80 %

VERDICT Rocker design made running feel efficient, but it lacks the more responsive feel of others on test

220 TRIATHLON
BEST ON TEST

INOV-8 TRAILTALON GTX £140

★★★★★

inov8.com

Confession: one of my all-time favourite trail-running shoes is Inov-8's X-Talon G235s. Its streamlined last means its weight is negligible and that low profile cranks up the connection with terra-firma, which is so important when the ground's jagged beneath. The Trailtalon (371g) – in fact, all five of the shoes tested here – couldn't have differed more with each packing cushioning commonly seen in a road shoe. But that's not to say each of these doesn't have its merits. And in my eyes, the Trailtalon just about merits top of the class in the men's test.

First up, fit. Inov-8's taken a leaf out of New Balance's book by offering some of its shoes in several width options – precision fit, standard fit and wife fit. According to the Lake District brand's width chart, there's a 5mm difference between these width options, albeit the Trailtalons come in just standard and wide. For this UK11, that meant 102mm (rather than 107mm for wide), which wrapped around the foot securely.

Cushioning's not up there with its competition, which is no bad thing as this does increase your feel for the ground. Whether it was rutted trails or muddy ascents, your feet, body and mind were very clear what was going on. This heightened proprioception should reduce the chances of an off-road injury. That's not to say they weren't comfy, the combination of Inov-8's Powerflow midsole and their Boomerang footbed – insoles that feature hundreds of foam beads that compress and spring back to maximise energy return – cushioning every stride.

These are designed for a proper UK winter. Hence, the Gore-Tex membrane. It does a good job at keeping your feet dry in light puddles and shallow mud, though no amount of Gore-Tex defends you from some truly muddy trails. Still, for the most part we appreciated avoiding trench foot!

Where the Trailtalon GTX really excels is grip. The outsole features numerous 6mm lugs that increase traction on soft, wet and hard surfaces. They're helped in no small part by graphene, which has been infused into the rubber.

For those unfamiliar, graphene is a form of carbon, consisting of a single layer of atoms in a hexagonal lattice. This structure makes it extremely strong and stretchable. Inov-8 hooked up witho the National Graphene Institute (NGI) several years ago in an effort to integrate graphene into their shoes. It seems to boost grip and adds durability.

All in all, this is a good shoe that'll send you confidently through the elements. But there's one minor downside and it's visual. In other words, that grey. When you're running in the winter, nine days out of 10 you'll be running beneath a ceiling of doom. A lick of colour would be appreciated. **JW**

91 %

VERDICT Not the lightest trail shoe but will defy most winter days with great fit and grip

NEW BALANCE FRESH FOAM X HIERRO V8 ★★★★½

£140

newbalance.co.uk

If your winter trails look pretty dry and firm, arguably this 319g shoe could be for you; in fact, it's so comfortable and cushioned that this could double as a road shoe. Yes, its Vibram outsole's peppered with lugs but they're relatively shallow at 4mm. That cosy feel derives from its Fresh Foam X midsole, which is seen on many of NB's road and off-road shoes. That cushioning doesn't come at the cost of pace, though, as it's lively. It also feels stable – much needed on the trails. Like the majority of New Balance's road and off-road shoes, it comes in two different width options: standard and wide. I pitched for the 'standard'. Despite their slender nature, these fit perfectly with room enough around the toebox but nice and secure in the midfoot. They're a great shoe for road to light trails. **JW**

82 %

VERDICT Great for firm trails but not for the mud. Good to see two width options for slimmer and wider feet

220 TRIATHLON
HIGHLY RATED

ALTRA OLYMPUS 6 £155 ★★★★☆

altrarunning.eu

Looking for a roomy trail shoe that still feels secure? Then this should nestle on your radar. Firstly, it's a maximalist offering, hitting the scales at a mighty 415g. Its largesse stems from myriad factors including what Altra term its "plush-compressed EVA". Despite that, it's zero heel-to-toe drop, ensuring you don't feel like you're wearing high heels in the mud. You actually feel nice and connected, albeit it might be too bulky for some, especially those used to hitting the trails in a more streamlined shoe. To that end, the toebox is roomy enough to house a small family and is designed to liberate your toes with every foot strike. It's comfortable from the get-go thanks to a "premium Achilles pillow" and does have a bullet-proof quality to it. There's also a neat hook-and-loop tab to attach gaiters if you're going hardcore. **JW**

79 %

VERDICT Solid shoe but touch too roomy for some – one for runners with wide feet. Very plush overall

MEN'S SHOES

ADIDAS TERREX AGRAVIC SPEED ULTRA £200

★★★★☆

adidas.co.uk

When the Adidas Terrex Agravic Speed Ultra shoes finally hit the shelves, they arrived to a huge amount of anticipation. By this point, the carbon-plated trail shoes had carried some of the brand's pro running team to multiple podiums. They promised to be a speedy trail shoe for the ages. Now that they're available to us mere mortals, do they live up to their billing? Well, yes and no.

Let's start with some numbers. The Agravic Speed Ultra comes with a lofty stack height of 42mm at the heel and 34mm in the forefoot, giving us a drop of 8mm. That's accompanied by a decent wedge of cushioning, a somewhat aggressive rocker profile and carbon 'energy rods' rather than a plate.

The result, as you might expect, is a very propulsive ride. At slower paces there's a slight bounce and that rocker lightly coerces you into motion. Time and time again I found myself having to check my speed, as the shoes are begging – no, physically shoving – you to move quicker. When you oblige, you get to enjoy a smooth, buoyant ride. This really is a shoe built for speed; it delivers on that front. And yet, it's not overly firm, either. There is of course a slight rigidness due to the carbon, but it's far from obtrusive, and the cushioning felt well suited to a range of distances.

So how about what lies beneath? Given the mix of 3mm and 2.5mm lugs on the outsole, it's fair to assume these perhaps aren't built for muddy hillsides or wet trails with churned up mud. And while that's largely true, I was surprised by how well the traction held up in such conditions. Going uphill, I didn't find myself sliding around as much as other shoes with low-profile tread, which I'm going to put down to the tread pattern. Things weren't quite as sticky going downhill, but that's hardly a surprise.

Although testing showed me these shoes could deal with wet mud in some circumstances, I wouldn't be recommending them for runs where this was the predominant surface. On hard-packed gravel and dirt or soft but dry ground, they're very much at home, though. That is, as long as the ground isn't that technical. You see, the Agravic Speed Ultras not only have a high stack height, but the outsole also has a particularly narrow profile around the mid-foot and, to some extent, the rear. Couple this with the extremely lithe and lightweight upper, and the result is a lack of stability. It's unfortunately quite noticeable when you're on uneven ground, which is likely to be a bit of an issue for many. It was for me. That said, more accomplished runners may find it okay, as we've seen on the pro circuit.

All in all, the Agravic Speed Ultras are a lightweight (314g per shoe, size UK11), speedy triumph on non-technical ground but not the most stable. **RS**

78 %

VERDICT Speedy and propulsive, but a lack of stability is this shoe's Achilles' heel and won't be for everyone

SAUCONY
TRIUMPH 22 GTX £190

★★★★☆

saucony.co.uk

Nearly £200 for a run shoe that doesn't include a carbon midsole? What craziness is this. Well, modern recreational-sport craziness, that's what. Saucony justifies the price with the use of Gore-Tex for waterproofing purposes. The non-GTX Triumph 22 £20 cheaper at £170. Which highlights a major hurdle for trail aficionados. This is a road shoe wrapped in a waterproof top. That's not to say it isn't comfortable and doesn't fit securely. It does, the former achieved via Saucony's responsive PWRRUN PB cushioning; the latter thanks to an adaptive lacing system and a comfy tongue. It's also pretty swift for such a cushioned shoe and one featuring a 10mm drop. So, there's much to like. But its lack of simple off-road features like added grip suggest this is a waterproof shoe more than a trail shoe. **JW**

74 %

VERDICT Good winter shoe but not a trail shoe. Worth a look if you like Saucony and hate wet feet though!

SCOTT
KINABALU 3 £145

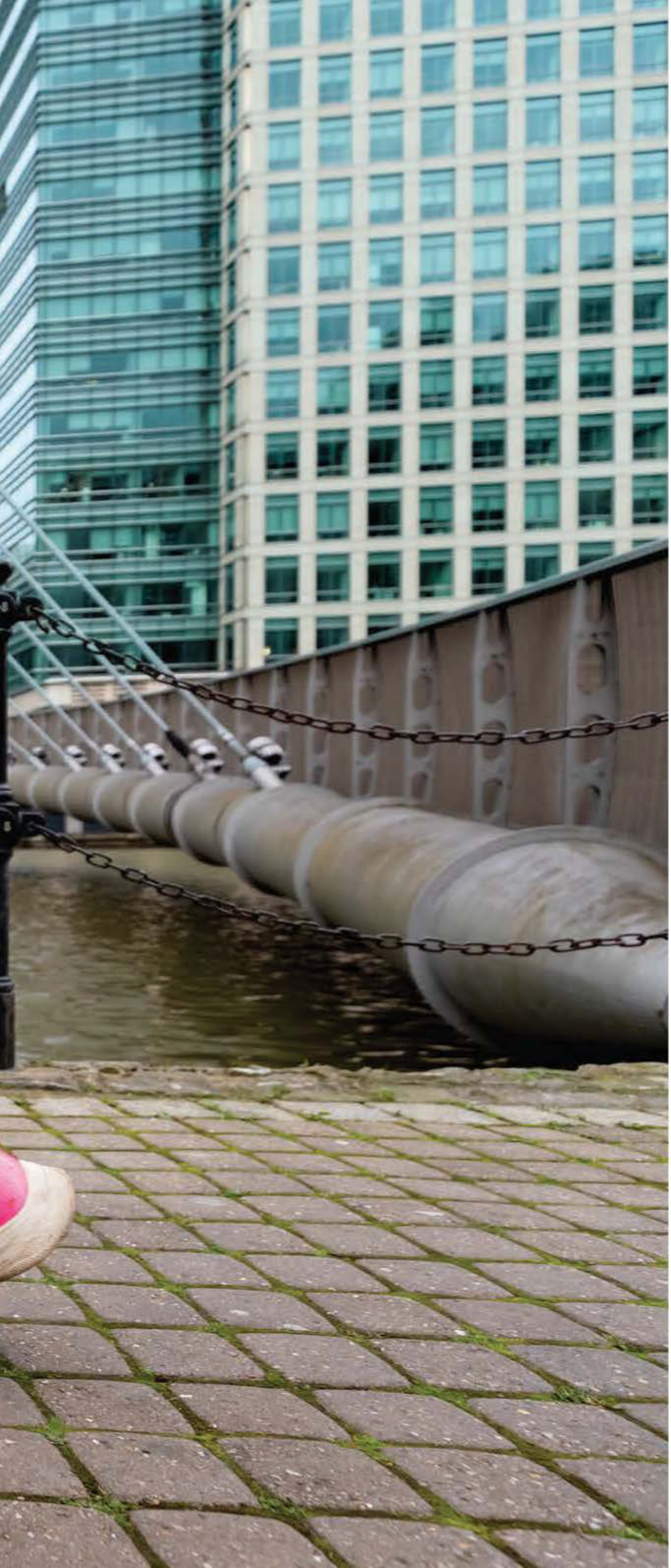
★★★★☆

scott-sports.com

First things first, looks. We're not huge fans of our test model's bright white (363g) colourway. That aside though, there's much to like about the Kinabalu 3 including comfort. "Dual density kinetic foam" adds a certain luxury while Scott's Evolved Rocker2 technology's designed to augment that comfortable landing with a smooth transition to toe off. Which it achieves, albeit there are faster shoes here, especially the Inov-8. Your feet feel extremely stable and supported thanks to the padded heel cup. Padding's not excessive, though to reduce the chances of absorbing water. An overlay runs around the base of the upper to protect abrasion caused by dirt and grit, which is reinforced by toe protection. A lugged outsole adds grip but again not to the level of the Inov-8. **JW** 220

79 %

VERDICT Bonafide off-road shoe though lacks a little pace. Colour pointless in a trail shoe



BUYER'S GUIDE

RUNNING TIGHTS

Unless you like chapped shins and knocking knees, covering your legs while running in the winter is essential. Here are eight sets of running tights tried and tested...

WORDS AND PHOTOS MATT BAIRD & HELEN WEBSTER
MAIN IMAGE GETTY IMAGES

Triathletes are no strangers to Lycra, but when it comes to winter, tight-fitting kit comes into its own as a way of keeping warm as well as just for its properties of stretch and aerodynamics.

Running tights (also known as leggings) are the ideal way of keeping the cold off your legs and preventing cold, chapped shins and blotchy corned-beef skin (it's a thing). Over the next few pages we've tested eight pairs – four men's and six women's – but most of the styles shown are available for both genders, albeit with small style differences and colours.

So what to look for? Fit is key, as too big or ill-fitting and they'll come down as you run or dig in. Look for some with a waist cord to adjust them, or with a higher-waisted design which is less likely to slip (and has the bonus of keeping your stomach warm).

Other key features include a zipped pocket for keys/gels, as well as zips on the ankles to make getting them on and off easier. Also consider the material they are made from and how well they will protect you from wind and rain. ▸

Men's run tights

BAM
HUCKABY BAMBOO LEGGINGS

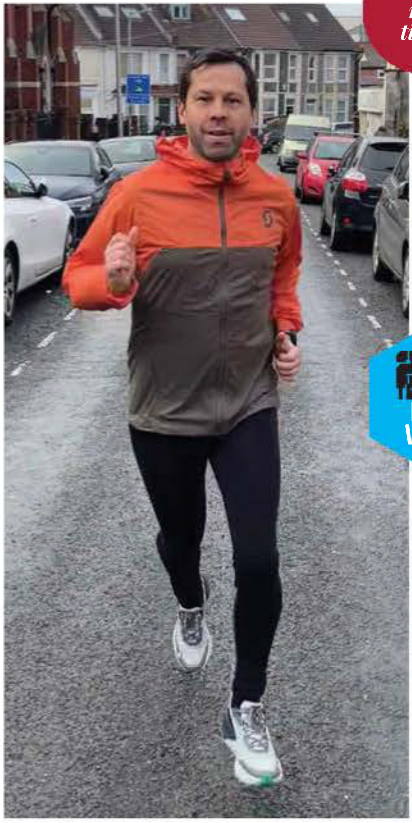
£30 ★★★★½

bambooclothing.co.uk

The 68% bamboo and 28% organic cotton construction of the Huckaby Bamboo Leggings give these a soft and cosy feel. Breathability and sweat wicking is impressive and they also dry relatively quickly. There's a handy zipper rear pocket, but the zipper head felt too small and lacked a loop for easy use. The 4% inclusion of elastane gives them a bit of stretch, but they're noticeable loose. An adjustable waistband is also absent, meaning you'll have to hope the elasticated band fits you. They're especially comfortable around the crotch area and caused no rubbing here, while internal comfort is aided by the flatlock seams. Refreshingly, I expected them to cost more than the £39 pricetag.

85 %

VERDICT Comfy, cosy and well-priced. And with the eco benefits of bamboo, too, which also aided performance



220 TRIATHLON BEST VALUE

ALPKIT
KOULIN TRAIL TIGHTS

£39.99 ★★★★☆

alpkit.com

The rear pocket here has a secure zipper, with a decently sized zipper head and loop for easy use. The pocket is big enough for stashing a phone and the elasticated, if somewhat chunky, waistband helps to keep the leggings in place. The stash pockets on each leg are handy for gels, a headband or gloves, and there are reflective details. The ankle zips help with post-run removal and the internal flatlock seams are comfy. At 237g, the Koulin are slightly weightier and thicker than others and I'd probably look at leaner leggings for higher intensity sets and winter races. The design also suggests longevity, the mesh panels located on the rear of the knees aids both ventilation and flexibility, and the addition of 15% Lycra gives decent stretch.

80 %

VERDICT Decent value and versatility for winter running and hiking if a little too warm for hard sessions

INOV-8
RACE ELITE TIGHT

£65 ★★★★½

inov-8.com

Pay a bit more than the Alpkit and BAM and extra features come into play, as evidenced in the abrasion-resistant panels on the calves of the Race Elite Tights from Cumbria's run specialists Inov-8. Other smart features include the soft gripper tape inside the waist to assist the drawstring waist with keeping things in place. Even the drawcords have a classy finish at the tips. The material is a winner as well, offering UPF 50+ sun protection from UVA and UVB rays, and a healthy dose of elastane (10-25% depending on the location) for flexibility on the move. Internal flatlock seams keep things comfortable inside, and they're warm and breathable. There's a large pocket, but it did sag a little.

88 % **VERDICT** A tough, warm and restriction free pair for winter sets. Finely crafted but pocket/tiny zip could be better

220 TRIATHLON HIGHLY RATED

MONTANE
SLIPSTREAM TRAIL TIGHTS

£80 ★★★★☆

montane.com

For the higher price here you get smooth regenerated nylon yarns, reflective details and a lightweight 214g design. The rear pockets are a little too small for storing anything safely in them though and I didn't trust their wide, open design. The rear zipped pocket is secure and sizeable, however. The waist band with draw cord kept the waist in place even with the pockets full. The zippers on the legs don't extend very far up the legs, meaning it's a slight struggle getting the Slipstreams over some running shoes. Internally, the Slipstreams are slick and neatly crafted – flatlock seams are present – and remained chafe-free around the groin. They were unrestrictive when on the move – aided by 12% elastane in the main body.

75 % **VERDICT** Slick construction offers comfort, but some of the features flatter to deceive

Women's run tights

MONTANE SLIPSTREAM THERMAL

£90 ★★★★☆

montane.com

Heading up to Kendal for the annual Mountain Festival in November I was met with freezing weather. The point of this? These thermal tights from Montane really came into their own. The four-way stretch fabric with brushed lining was toasty warm, while there are panels on the thighs made from a more substantial 'Granite Loft' fabric which did a great job of keeping me protected from wind and rain. There's a large zippy pocket which I used for keys as well as smaller open pockets for gels. There are small reflective details and zips at the ankle for ease of getting on/off over run shoes. I don't love these as I find the zips often irritate my ankle bone, but they can be handy. Adjustment is via drawcord.

86%

VERDICT Superb tights for cold, wintery weather and the fit was great. Plenty of features, too.

SOAR RUN TIGHTS

£160 ★★★★★

soarrunning.com

Soar are making a name for themselves in top-end run kit and these tights are no different. Gulp at that price tag by all means, but these tights are unlike anything I've ever tried before. Made from a super-lightweight fabric with laser-cut seams the material feels barely-there once they are on, but still kept me warm enough on chilly winter mornings plus they're quick drying. The tights have no drawcord but are held by a series of rubber grippers at the waist, knee and ankle which worked superbly and avoided any feeling of constriction or bulk with a flat waistband. A large zipped pocket on the rear was big enough for a phone, though I preferred just to keep small items in there. I'm in an XL here which is the largest size available.

92%

VERDICT Expensive but the quality and feel here is unparalleled. Kit to cherish. Shame larger sizes aren't catered for

220 TRIATHLON CUTTING EDGE

ARCTERYX
ESSENTIAL UTILITY LEGGING

£130 ★★★★★

Arcteryx.com

These were one of those pairs of run tights that I knew were going to be a hit as soon as I pulled them on. From the silky-smooth fabric to the wide, perfectly-fitting waistband I couldn't wait to run in them. Arcteryx sent a size 12 which equates to a UK16 and the fit was perfect (they come in equivalent to UK2 to 18 and three colourways). The Nylon and Lycra fabric was comfortable and very breathable, yet warm enough for mild winter days. As you'd expect from an outdoor brand there's plenty of room to stash stuff too. The whole waistband features a deep pocket, ideal for gels and small items. There's a deep pocket on each leg and a key loop while a drawcord at the waist can be used to adjust them.

94 %

VERDICT Just so comfy and functional I reach for them time after time. Plenty of room to stash things, too!

220 TRIATHLON BEST ON TEST

ASICS
ROAD HIGH WAIST TIGHT

£63 ★★★★☆

asics.com

Here in a rather festive green (also in red online) these road tights come in a generous size range from XS to 2XL and at a reasonable price point. Fabric is a Polyester/Elastane mix with 50% from recycled materials. I tested a size L and fit was good here. The wide waistband incorporated a draw cord which made adjustment easy. There are other features too including one side pocket perfect for a phone and nicely close-fitting, a back one for gels, plus two rear loops which can be used to 'hang' a jacket through. I'm not keen on having things flapping round me as I run so these were a bit pointless. No zippy pocket/loop for keys though, which is disappointing and one of my deal-breakers! Punched holes on the back of the knees claim to aid breathability. 220

78 %

VERDICT Solid performing tight that won't let you down. I missed a key pocket/loop though

ESSENTIAL KIT

All you need to train & race, as rated by our 220 Kit Zone expert testers

TOP-END WETSUITS

If your goal is to exit T1 first, you'll want a suit that strikes the balance between flexibility, buoyancy and comfort, while also being super easy to remove on the fly.

Orca
Apex Flex
★★★★½
£589 Soft and flexible; ideal for good swimmers.
Issue 432
orca.com

Yonda
Ghost 3
★★★★½
£589 Impressive mix of flexibility and buoyancy.
Issue 417
yondasports.com

Sailfish
G-Range 8
★★★★★
£691 Unrivalled freedom and the fastest on test.
Issue 432
sailfish.com

Zone3
Vanquish X
★★★★½
£699 A dizzying array of tech put to good use.
Issue 432
zone3.com

Zoggs
Hypex Ultra FS
★★★★½
£700 Incredibly supple; improved hydrodynamics.
Issue 432
zoggs.com

BUDGET WETSUITS

Always try before you buy as sizes can vary massively between brands. Then consider your swim ability, as some features may be lost on newbies (e.g. thin neoprene and reduced buoyancy).

Van Rysel
SD Neoprene
★★★★☆
£119.99 A great option for shorter distances.
Issue 406
decathlon.co.uk

Lomo
Nuotare
★★★★☆
£125 Price, comfort and inclusive sizing combine.
Issue 422
lomo.co.uk

Speedo
Proton
★★★★½
£140 A crazy price for a suit that performs so well.
Issue 417
speedo.com

Zone3
Aspect
★★★★½
£179 Performs well and is breaststroke specific.
Issue 429
zone3.com

Orca
Athlex Float
★★★★½
£239 Great movement and buoyancy.
Issue 417
orca.com

POOL GOGGLES

When shopping for a new pair, consider tint to deal with bright lighting, width of vision and comfort to ensure a fuss-free swim.

Orca
Killa Speed
★★★★½
£17 Sleek goggles with a choice of nose bridges.
Issue 427
orca.com

Zoggs
Predator
★★★★½
£25 Great price and size range; no leaks or fogging.
Issue 427
zoggs.com

Tri-Fit
Rapid-X
★★★★½
£30 Superb visibility; soft and comfy gaskets.
Issue 427
tri-fitathletic.com

Roka
R1 Clear
★★★★½
£32 Superb all-round visibility. Great fit, too.
Issue 427
uk.roka.com

Zone3
Volare
★★★★½
£35 Great, comfy fit, plus polarised lenses.
Issue 427
zone3.com

OPEN-WATER GOGGLES

Outdoor swimming goggles should ideally have mirrored or polarised lenses for greater clarity. Often the lenses are bigger, too, for greater peripheral vision.

Orca
Killa Comfort
★★★★½
£24 Comfortable, great visibility and an impressive price. Good stuff.
Issue 430
orca.com

Zoggs
Predator Ultra
★★★★½
£38 A true classic and top performance from the polarized lenses.
Issue 430
zoggs.com

TheMagic5
Blue Mirror Gold
★★★★½
£75 Made-to-measure goggles that deliver near perfection.
Issue 430
themagic5.com

Aquasphere
Defy.Ultra
★★★★½
£129.99 Elevating swim masks to a new level. But at quite a price.
Issue 430
uk.aquasphereswim.com

Form
Smart Swim 2
★★★★½
£229 Unique tech that offers real benefits for pool and open water.
Issue 430
formswim.com

COLD-WATER SWIM KIT

Adding neoprene accessories can make your winter swimming much less biting, so consider swim caps, gloves and socks.

Lomo
Open Water Socks
★★★★☆
£21 Good breadth of sizing, plus appreciated grippers to avoid slipping.
Issue 425
lomo.co.uk

Orca
Thermal Cap
★★★★½
£35 Warm and plenty of flex; great thermal lining for the price.
Issue 425
orca.com

Zone3
Heat-Tech Gloves
★★★★½
£39 Toasty and great grip. Liquid-seal finish ensures snug fit.
Issue 425
zone3.com

Zone3
Heat-Tech Socks
★★★★½
£39 You can't argue with the warmth and waterproofing here.
Issue 425
zone3.com

2XU
Propel Gloves
★★★★½
£45 Cosy pair of gloves with superb grip. Just check the size fits you.
Issue 425
uk.2xu.com

For tonnes more tri kit, head to 220tri.com

TURBO TRAINERS

Turbo trainers range from the traditional A-frame design to smart trainers that sync to online training platforms like Zwift and Rouvy.

Tacx
Flow
★★★★☆
£299.99 Simple set up, impressively quiet and a great price.
Issue 426
garmin.com

Wahoo
Kickr Core
★★★★½
£549.99 Capable and quiet. Comes with 12 months of Zwift, too.
Issue 415
uk.wahoofitness.com

Saris
H3
★★★★½
£749.99 Feature packed and accurate. Often heavily discounted.
Issue 426
saris.com

Elite
Justo
★★★★☆
£999.99 'Flex Feet' provides a natural ride feel and relatively light at 17kg.
Issue 426
elite-it.com

Wahoo
Kickr Move
★★★★☆
£1,399.99 A very good high-end trainer, but needs tweaking. Pricey.
Issue 426
uk.wahoofitness.com

TRIATHLON BIKES

The key here is fit and comfort. Remember: the least aerodynamic thing on the bike is you, so have a bike fit to refine your position.

Argon 18
E119 Tri+ Disc
★★★★☆
£7,300 This is a fast, aggressive triathlon superbike with plenty of impressive innovation.
See 220triathlon.com
argon18.com

Orro
Venturi Tri
★★★★½
£5,950 Climbs purposefully, handles like a road bike and is pretty damn fast.
Issue 421
orrobikes.com

Cube
Aerium C:68X SLT
★★★★½
£8,999 A blisteringly fast, cutting-edge tri superbike with a bonus hydration option.
Issue 428
cube.eu

Canyon
Speedmax CFR Disc
★★★★★
£12,949 Blisteringly fast and the best integration we've seen on a triathlon bike.
Issue 388
canyon.com

Trek
Speed Concept SLR 9 AXS
★★★★½
£13,000 Fast and compliant, with disc brakes and all mod cons.
See 220triathlon.com
trekbikes.com

AEROBARS

You provide around 80% of the drag you endure on the bike. That's why a pair of clip-on aerobars is vital for a streamlined performance.

Van Rysel
Aptonia
★★★★☆
£39.99 Incredible-value aerobars that though aimed at long distance are better for short course.
Issue 431
decathlon.co.uk

BBB
Aerobase
★★★★☆
£64.95 Well-shaped extensions and range make these a smart clip-on introduction.
Issue 420
bbbcycling.com

Profile Design
Sonic Ergo 39A
★★★★☆
£149.99 Versatile, good-value clip-ons that are easily fitted. A multitude of configurations.
Issue 431
profile-design-eu.com

Profile Design
Subsonic Ergo 35A
★★★★½
£179.99 Great for those looking to go very low, but standard Sonics have broader appeal.
Issue 420
profile-design-eu.com

Deda
Elementi Superzero Extensions
★★★★☆
£207.99 Well-crafted and lightweight. Their stubby design isn't for all.
Issue 420
dedaelementi.com

TRI BIKE SHOES

Triathlon bike shoes are subtly, but importantly, different than cycling shoes as they contain features for a swift transition. Heel loop, rapid closure system and sole drainage holes are some of the multisport features.

Van Rysel
Aptonia
★★★½☆
£79.99 A solid shoe and a good price, though the jury's out regarding the closure zipper.
Issue 428
decathlon.co.uk

Mavic
Cosmic Elite Tri
★★★★½
£165 Comfortable shape, fine closure system and nice big pull tab for fast transitions.
Issue 428
mavic.com

DMT
KT1
★★★★½
£249.99 Phenomenal comfort, impressive breathability and very supportive.
Issue 428
chickencyclekit.co.uk

Fizik
Transiro Hydra Aeroweave Carbon
★★★★½
£289.99 A fine shoe with numerous tri-friendly features, but pricey.
Issue 428
fizik.com

Mavic
Ultimate Tri
★★★★☆
£385 Wonderfully stiff and breathable shoe but cost hard to justify for the majority.
Issue 428
mavic.com

HELMETS

Helmets are divided into road, aero road and aero. Each has its attributes, from greater ventilation to lowering drag. Note: if you go full-on aero, those benefits are lost if you can't maintain an aero position.

Van Rysel
FCR
★★★★½
£89.99 Solid aero performance and plenty of race-friendly features.
Issue 431
decathlon.co.uk

Met
Estro MIPS
★★★★☆
£120 A lean and stylish mid-range lid with added safety benefits.
Issue 412
met-helmets.com

Giro
Eclipse Spherical
★★★★½
£239.99 Great fitting mechanism and slick dial for a comfy fit.
Issue 431
giro.com

Specialized
S-Works Evade 3
★★★★½
£250 Fast, streamlined and comfortable. One of the best out there.
Issue 431
specialized.com

Abus
Gamechanger 2
★★★★☆
£289 One of the safest helmets out there plus solid aero credentials.
Issue 431
upgradebikes.co.uk

ESSENTIAL KIT

HEADPHONES

Sound quality's integral to any set of headphones but, when it comes to triathlon, safety plays a big part, too. Cue bone-conduction headphones, plus options for swimming.

Shokz
OpenRun
★★★★★
£129.95 Quality option that lets you hear the surrounding area, too.
Issue 403
uk.shokz.com

H2O
Audio Sonar Pro
★★★★½
£147 Swim- specific option with great sound and comfort.
Issue 422
h2oaudio.com

Suunto
Wing
★★★★☆
£169 Solid sound for an out-of-ear headphone; LED lights boost visibility.
Issue 425
suunto.com

Shokz
OpenSwim
★★★★☆
£169.95 Another swim-specific pair that does a solid job.
Issue 422
uk.shokz.com

Shokz
OpenFit
★★★★½
£179 Great sound and comfy, but easier to hear surroundings with others.
Issue 423
uk.shokz.com

TRAIL RUNNING SHOES

A good trail shoe features a breathable upper to aid drainage. Good traction's also vital for staying upright on undulating and muddy terrain.

Nike
Pegasus Trail 4
★★★★☆
£129.95 Flexible and decent traction, albeit not aggressive enough for proper muddy trails.
Issue 425
sportsshoes.com

Saucony
Peregrine 13
★★★★½
£130 If you're looking for an all-rounder that offers good value and decent performance, this is it.
Issue 425
saucony.com

Inov-8
Roclite G 275 V2
★★★★½
£135 A bulletproof trail shoe that's well-suited to wintery conditions and offers reasonable value.
Issue 425
inov-8.com

La Sportiva
Cyklon
★★★★½
£170 A wonderful, technical trail shoe with great traction and the reliable BOA dial.
Issue 425
lasportiva.com

Hoka
Tecton X 2
★★★★½
£185 An enjoyable, propulsive yet stable ride, though not perfect in deep, wet mud.
Issue 425
hoka.com

MILEAGE RUN SHOES

Your off-season running should include a weekly long run for aerobic conditioning, albeit don't forget occasional speedwork. All of these should fit the bill.

Inov8
Roadfly
★★★★½
£100 If you are after the same connection you feel on the trail on the road, this is for you.
Issue 435
inov8.com

Nike
Pegasus 41
★★★★½
£128.99 A reliable option for easy miles, as long as you don't mind the high heel-to-toe drop.
Issue 435
sportshoes.com

Brooks
Ghost 2 Max
★★★★★
£145 A reliable, super comfortable and robust shoe that will do wonders for your road running.
Issue 435
brooksrunning.com

New Balance
Fresh Foam 1080
★★★★★
£160 The Fresh Foam 1080 is an excellent shoe for racking up gentle miles in supreme comfort.
Issue 435
newbalance.co.uk

Saucony
Endorphin Speed 4
★★★★★
£180 A versatile, comfy and impressive shoe that's primed for pushing the pace and easy runs.
Issue 435
saucony.com

RUN JACKETS

A good run jacket will fend off the elements like wind and rain, but also deliver breathability so you don't boil in the bag. Reflectives, a hood and pockets add to its usefulness.

Keela
Saxon Jacket
★★★★☆
£109.95 Versatile and well-priced jacket, but not one for hotter or high-tempo runs.
Issue 436
keelaoutdoors.com

Montane
Cetus Lite
★★★★☆
£270 Great for deflecting winds and rain, but more for hiking than for running.
Issue 436
montane.com

Soar
All-weather jacket
★★★★½
£350 It's hard to ignore that price, but this is a formidable jacket for battling the weather.
Issue 436
salomon.com

Asics
Core jacket
★★★★½
£54 Lightweight, affordable and stylish, but not for running in really wet conditions.
Issue 436
asics.com

INOV-8
Performance Hybrid
★★★★½
£150 A well-crafted, durable and comfortable jacket. Huge versatility makes the price a bargain.
Issue 436
inov8.com

HEART RATE MONITORS

These chest or armband straps are more accurate than wrist-based optic sensors on watches. Many can be used independently or linked to a watch or smartphone.

Wahoo
Tickr
★★★★½
£39.99 Superb training tool with great connectivity and all for under £40.
Issue 435
uk.wahoofitness.com

Coros
Heart Rate Monitor
★★★½☆
£69 Straps to your arm for proven accuracy but arguably could offer more features.
Issue 435
uk.coros.com

Wahoo
Trackr
★★★★☆
£79.99 Accurate and comfy chest strap that can be recharged, but that does mean another cable.
Issue 435
uk.wahoofitness.com

Polar
H10
★★★★½
£86.50 Excellent accuracy and extremely quick to connect. Comfortable, too.
Issue 435
polar.com

Garmin
Pro Plus
★★★★☆
£119.99 Impressive chest strap that'll appeal to existing Garmin users for multisport action.
Issue 410
garmin.com

For tonnes more tri kit, head to 220tri.com

MULTISPORT WATCHES

Tech evolution's seen computers shrink to watch size. As such, you can expect GPS, heart rate, sleep measurements and a whole lot more, starting from about £200.

Coros
Pace 3
★★★★½
£219 Swift GPS, huge battery life and a wonderful price. A fine effort from Coros.
Issue 422
uk.coros.com

Garmin
Forerunner 265
★★★★½
£429.99 Great AMOLED screen displays a wealth of useful training and racing information.
Issue 422
garmin.com

Suunto
Race
★★★★½
£479 Fantastic multisport watch that comes in at a very good price point.
Issue 425
suunto.com

Apple
Watch Ultra 2
★★★★☆
£799 Apple's sport offerings continue to improve. But it'll strike your bank account.
Issue 424
apple.com

Garmin
Fenix 8
★★★★½
£949.99 Yes, that's a mortgage-threatening price but this watch packs everything and more.
Issue 435
garmin.com

TRI-SUITS

Tri-suits are vital as you can wear them from gun to finish. They should shed water nicely after exiting T1, contain a comfy chamois for the bike and be flexible come the run. Pockets are also useful.

Zone3
Activate+
★★★★½
£115 Great breathability, seam construction and internal lining cranks up this suit"s comfort.
Issue 430
zone3.com

Raceskin
Aero
★★★★½
£130 An impressive mix of tecnology and comfort at a very impressive price point.
Issue 430
raceskin.co.uk

NoPinz
Pro-1 Evo
★★★★½
£184.99 A well-priced, comfy and aero suit in multiple sizing options. A fine, fine suit.
Issue 431
nopinz.com

Zoot
Ultra Triathlon P1
★★★★½
£292 A superb suit that really excels in the heat and humidity. Might need bigger pad for Ironman.
Issue 431
zootsports.co.uk

Castelli
PR 2 Speedsuit
★★★★½
£360 A highly technical, speedy and supple suit… if you can afford the high price tag.
Issue 431
castelli-cycling.com

ENERGY GELS

These sachets of energy are useful for all disciplines, but especially the run as they're easily stowed. Many contain a mix of glucose and fructose to deliver more energy.

High5
Electrolyte Energy Gel
★★★★☆
£1.45 A great-value energy gel that delivers with no airs or graces.
Issue 422
highfive.co.uk

SiS
Go Isotonic Gel
★★★★☆
£1.67 The original isotonic gel and one that stands the test of time. Berry flavour is our pick.
Issue 422
scienceinsport.com

Torq
Cola Caffeine Gel
★★★★☆
£2.15 The caffeine version delivers a performance boost without sacrificing taste.
Issue 422
torqfitness.com

Precision
Fuel Original Gel
★★★★½
£2.25 Great consistency, appreciated neutral taste and packs away neatly.
Issue 422
precisionhydration.com

Maurten
Gel 100 Caf 100
★★★★☆
£3.21 Hydrogel formulation settles smoothly, albeit this is one costly energy hit.
Issue 422
maurten.com

SUNGLASSES

Arguably, these should be termed 'performance eyewear' as they should be worn year-round to protect from dirt flicking up from your mate's rear wheel. Wraparound models are common for great and clear peripheral vision.

Tifosi
Vogel SL
★★★★☆
£54.99 Great price for comfortable sunglasses that boost contrasts well and stay in place.
Issue 432
tifosi-optics.co.uk

Sungod
Airas
★★★★½
£140 Impressive sunglasses with class-leading field of view, but not infallible in direct light.
Issue 432
sungod.co

Smith
Motive
★★★★½
£160 If they fit you well, these are exceptional sunglasses that excel on the bike and run.
Issue 432
smithoptics.com

Koo
Alibi
★★★★☆
£169.99 Stylish, secure and great field of vision, but no case and others better in super bright light.
Issue 432
kooworld.cc

Roka
GP-1X
★★★★☆
£230 Add an extra lens for low light and these would be best on test, but they don't come cheap.
Issue 432
uk.roka.com

ELECTROLYTE TABS/ POWDERS

You lose magnesium and potassium when you sweat, plus sodium, which channels water into muscles. This lot replaces them.

Phizz
3-in-1 Formula
★★★★☆
£7.99 for 20 Not sport-specific but still 317mg sodium, plus other vitamins and minerals.
Issue 421
phizz.co

SiS
Hydro
★★★★☆
£8 for 20 Palatable offering that delivers a range of electrolytes including 345mg sodium.
Issue 421
scienceinsport.com

Precision
Hydration 1000
★★★★½
£8.99 for 10 1,000mg sodium will suit many, but 500mg and 1,500mg options available.
Issue 421
precisionhydration.com

Skratch
Labs Hydration
★★★★☆
£27.95 for 20 Sodium content comes in at 380mg. Tastes good, but not cheap.
Issue 421
silverfish-uk.com

Styrkr
SLT05
Caffeine+
★★★½☆
£9.99 for six Solid product with 360mg sodium, but minimal caffeine content.
Issue 421
styrkr.com

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TRAINING

BOOST YOUR PERFORMANCE - **TODAY!**

TRAINING PEAKS

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STRENGTH TRAINING FOR LIFE

SIMON WARD
is a health, wellness, and performance coach who helps athletes optimise their sleep, nutrition, mobility and strength

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VEGAN TIPS AND RECIPES FOR ATHLETES

DAVID AND STEPHEN FLYNN
Authors and cookery school owners David and Stephen are experts in vegan cookery

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ASK THE TRIATHLON COACH

BEN BRIGHT
is a former triathlon Olympian (Sydney 2000) and head coach of British Triathlon's Olympic Programme.

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YOUR TRAINING QUESTIONS

ANDREW SHEAFF, JAMES WITTS, NIK COOK & BRAD BEER
Our experts answer Qs on using a kick board, adapting protein shakes, hill running and swim skills.

BUILD STRENGTH FOR LIFE (AND TRIATHLON)

PRACTICING REGULAR STRENGTH TRAINING WILL GIVE YOU BENEFITS BEYOND YOUR TRIATHLON CAREER. COACH SIMON WARD SHOWS YOU HOW – PLUS TURN THE PAGE FOR HIS 10 HANDY TIPS.

WORDS SIMON WARD **IMAGES** TRAININGPEAKS

I just don't have the time with all my swim, bike, and run training." This is the most common response I hear when asking triathletes about their strength training. It doesn't help that some prominent tri coaches dismiss strength work as unnecessary. However, as one coach wisely said, "context before content is important".

Many assume strength training means lifting heavy weights (sometimes essential—see point 2 over the page) or building muscle (challenging for triathletes with high aerobic workloads). But it's also about smaller, targeted movements that improve joint stability and which are key to preventing injuries common in triathlon.

Look at elite triathletes, and you'll find strength training is a regular part of their year-round routines. As a former strength coach turned triathlon coach, I've always found endurance athletes hesitant to embrace strength work compared to other sports. My first article for *220 Triathlon* Magazine in 1995 addressed this very topic. While attitudes have shifted somewhat, strength training remains a hard sell for many.

In the next 10 points, I'll explain why you should incorporate basic movements into your routine. A common concern I hear is, "I'd like to start, but I'm not sure what to do or how to begin". In which case the new TrainingPeaks Strength Builder is an excellent tool to help you overcome these challenges, and in tip number 10, I'll show you how to make the most of it.

While I rarely make guarantees, I'm 100% confident you'll see benefits. Think of it like planting seeds. Results may not be immediate, but over time, you'll notice a compound effect. Starting now means you'll feel stronger, more resilient, and better prepared by race season. It's worth the investment. ▸

MEET THE EXPERT

SIMON WARD

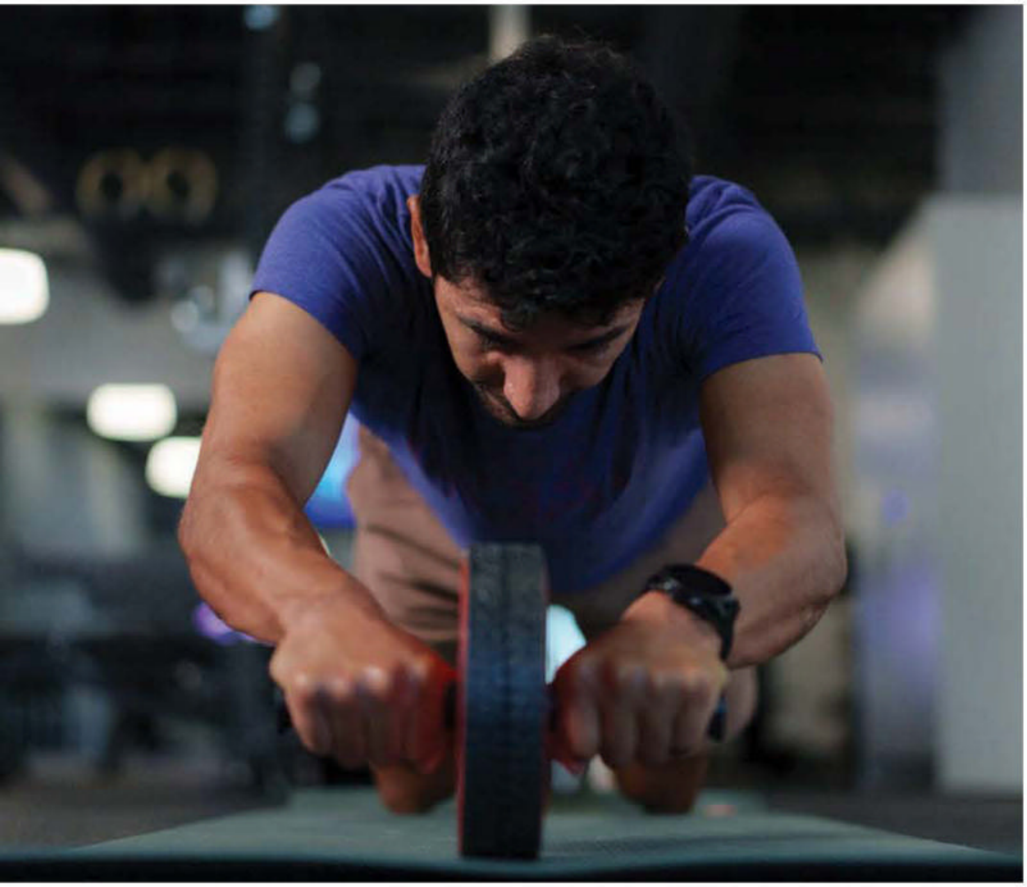
Simon Ward is a health, wellness, and performance coach who helps athletes optimise their sleep, nutrition, mobility, and strength to achieve better results in triathlon events. He is also the host of *The High Performance Human* podcast which is published weekly. Find out more at: *simonward.co.uk.*

10 WAYS TO BUILD STRENGTH FOR LIFE

Including strength training isn't as complicated as you might think. Here are Simon Ward's tips...

01 Get strength for life. You'll always be human, so functional strength is key. It's the foundation for performing everyday movements with ease and efficiency, like climbing stairs, lifting objects, or getting down to play with grandkids. Regular strength training enhances your ability to handle these tasks, making life more comfortable and enjoyable. Even if athletic performance isn't your goal, prioritising functional strength ensures you can thrive in daily life – now and in the future. Adding strength training to your routine is an investment in maintaining independence and quality of life, emphasising functional strength as the cornerstone before focusing on athletic prowess.

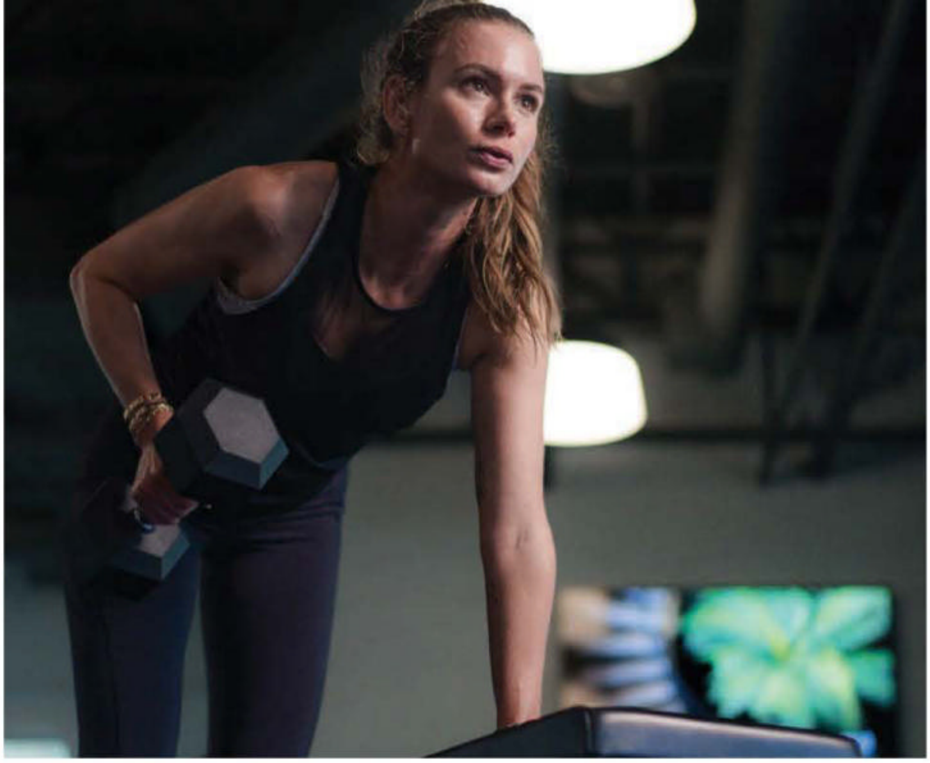
▼ Building muscle and strength is key in preventing injury.



02 Delay aging. Aging isn't easy. Visible signs aside, it often comes with muscle loss, reduced strength, power, and speed. You might notice changes in posture, increased aches, or decreased mobility. While aging can seem like bad news, there's good news: strength training can significantly slow muscle loss and even restore strength and power. These improvements benefit not only your functional strength but also your athletic performance.
By maintaining an active focus on building and preserving muscle, you can age with vitality and confidence.

03 Prevent injury. Swimmer Katie Ledecky's strength coach had one key directive: keep her body resilient enough for consistent swim sessions. Building muscle and power was secondary to injury prevention. Consistency is crucial for success, but injuries can derail training. For example, 75% of triathlon injuries are run-related, often caused by weak hip, calf, or foot muscles, while shoulder injuries can limit swimming. A single setback can halt progress. Strength training helps build a robust, injury-resistant body, allowing for greater consistency in training – ultimately boosting performance. Invest in resilience to unlock your full potential.

04 Maintain technique. Ever felt your muscles giving out mid-workout or race, causing you to slow down? It's common and often linked to fatigue in stabilising muscles around the shoulders, core, hips, and ankles. When these muscles tire, your technique suffers, making every movement more energy-intensive. The good



▲ Wondering what plan to follow? Use the TrainingPeaks Strength Builder function to guide you through.

news? This can be fixed with a regular strength program targeting these stabilisers. By building muscular endurance, you'll maintain proper form longer and perform at your best.

05 Start simple.

Feeling overwhelmed by complex strength workouts online? Start simple! If you don't have a routine yet, focus on basic bodyweight exercises like squats, push-ups, heel raises, or lunges. Even small steps are progress and can effectively build your strength.

06 Keep it short.

Worried about finding time for strength training? You're not alone – it can feel impossible to carve out two 60-minute sessions a week alongside your swim, bike and run workouts. The good news? A highly effective workout can be done in under 30 minutes. Stay points 7 ,8 and 9 for tips to make it happen!

07 Make it sustainable.

The key to any workout program is sustainability. The easier it fits into your routine, the better. Can you work out at home with bodyweight exercises or invest in some bands, dumbbells, or kettlebells? Is there a gym at your pool? Try a session after your swim. If there's a gym at work, consider fitting in a workout before work or during lunch.

08 Movements, not muscles!

Strength training often focuses on single-joint exercises like leg extensions or bicep curls, but for time-crunched athletes, compound movements are far more effective. These exercises involve multiple joints, helping your body work as a unit while maximizing efficiency. In fact, just three compound movements can deliver a full-body workout. Use the TrainingPeaks Strength Builder (*trainingpeaks.com*) to create your plan and record your workouts.

09 Be Primal.

Base your gym routine around the six primal movements: pull (e.g., chin-up, row), push (e.g., press-up, overhead press), hinge (e.g., deadlift, kettlebell swing), squat, lunge, and carry. Aim to cover each at least once a week, as fitting them all into one session might be too time-consuming. You can also combine movements, like a squat-to-overhead press, to maximise efficiency.

10 Get a coach.

A coach can help you get the most from your training, no matter your budget. You could start with a pre-designed TrainingPeaks plan, hire a strength coach for a few sessions to learn the basics, or invest in regular sessions for tailored guidance and accountability. A coach ensures proper technique, customizes your plan, and corrects form during workouts. The TrainingPeaks Strength Builder is another excellent tool, providing routines with video demonstrations via the TP app—perfect for staying on track and making the most of your training time. Visit *trainingpeaks.com* to find out more.

▼ Movements that work on functional fitness can be very helpful for the aging athlete.

NUTRITION

FUELLING THE VEGAN TRIATHLETE

Training and racing on a plant-based diet is possible, but there are things you can do to make it easier. Here's all the tips you need plus four great recipes to try...

WORDS/RECIPES: DAVID AND STEPHEN FLYNN

Whether you follow a plant-based diet already or are trying it out during Veganuary, it's important to get the right nutrients to fuel your training (and racing, if you continue beyond January).

To help, we turned to David and Stephen Flynn, authors of *The Happy Pear 20* which celebrates 20 years since they opened their own fruit and veg shop with a dream of 'creating a happier, healthier world and building community'. Since then the duo have expanded to add a coffee roastery, two organic farms, a cookery app and six cook books... Not only that, but they are keen endurance athletes so know a thing or two about fuelling and recovering with plants!

Over the next few pages we ask them some questions to help you get things right – plus share four recipes from their new book that you can try at home.

220: Can anyone who is very active benefit from a vegan diet?
Absolutely. I think one of the keys here is, rather than focusing on a vegan diet, it's to focus on eating a whole food, plant based diet. 9 in 10 people in the UK and Ireland are deficient in fibre; you'll get fibre in fruit, veg, beans, legumes, nuts and seeds and whole grains. So what we really recommend is, rather than a vegan diet, a diet that's focused predominantly in whole plant foods.

220: What are the benefits you see from trying to be vegan for just one month?
Again, the key here is to focus on eating whole foods, rather than being vegan, so you'll be upping your fibre intake significantly. Every human has a microbiome, which is in their large intestine, within your microbiome, 70% of your immune cells exist. And by eating fibre rich foods, you'll be bringing in what's known as a prebiotic which will help feed the microbes in your gut to proliferate more of the healthy strains. So some of the benefits you'll find from a diet focussed on plants and whole foods is that you'll naturally eat more fibre rich foods, which improves your gut health and your immune system. There's also been an association between the gut and the brain, via the vagus nerve, that it can improve your mental health. So I think eating more plant based will make you feel lighter and healthier, plus it's better for the planet!

While following a vegan diet, try to eat a diversity of plant based foods, and ensure you're eating enough calories, because when you are eating more whole plant foods they don't contain the refined fats or sugars, so you'll have to eat more food. And listen to your body. If you're hungry, eat more. Typically, if someone does eat a whole plant food diet, they can eat so much! I think this is the key that many people often just don't eat enough calories because they get fed up chewing. Things like nuts and nut butters are great if you're craving higher calorie dense foods.

220: What are the best foods to fuel training?
Green vegetables are one of the most nutritious foods you can possibly eat. And if you're someone that's trying to increase your protein intake, beans and legumes are wonderful. They're predominantly based on carbohydrates but they do have, typically anywhere from 15 to 20% protein content, and they're really high in fibre. So beans are incredible. And if you're someone that's not used to beans, hummus is also great as it's made from chickpeas and tahini, which both have a high

protein content and provide a source of fat to fuel recovery.

Protein is an important one too, you need to get enough so think nuts, tahini, nut butters and beans and pulses. Refried beans in a simple breakfast burrito is something we often have, smashed with some tofu. We'll put it with some turmeric, which is good for reducing inflammation, and some calinamic which is known as Black sulphur salt to give it an egg-like flavour. We'll often serve it then with avocado and tomato and some pickled onions, and just put it in a whole food wrap. It's a wonderful, simple and delicious meal.

220: Can you recommend any vegan sports nutrition products, ideas to make your own carb drinks, protein shakes, energy gels?
We recently ran a 130 kilometre endurance race, and one of the things we were eating were dates with almond butter, and we'd slightly cover them in chocolate, so it felt indulgent, but provided us with immediate energy. Or try bananas dipped in tahini, we also ate a lot of avocados! We tried to avoid gels or caffeine jellies, and instead focused predominantly on real food. We found it really helped in terms of when we were having a carb drink, we used tailwind, which was nice, but we did make our own natural Gatorade, a recipe you can find on our instagram page.

220: What recipe is your favourite after activity?
I tend to listen to my body, but I think hummus and some cucumber and carrot sticks is a great one. Coconut yogurt is also brilliant. We've an organic farm, so I try to use as much greens from that, because I think greens are one of the most nutritious foods you can have.

220: Why should triathletes try these recipes?
Based on research from the American good project, diversity is one of the keys to good health, and trying to eat in season, eating local, organic foods that are high in nutrition is just going to benefit your body in so many different ways and ultimately benefit your performance. But even beyond that, it'll help you feel more connected to the landscape, and it will help your mental health.

RASBERRY BAKEWELL BREAKFAST MUFFINS

MAKES 12 muffins **PREP** 10 mins **COOKING** 25 mins

INGREDIENTS • 2 tbsp ground flaxseeds • 6 tbsp water • 180g oats (use gluten-free for GF version) • 50g flour (use gluten-free for GF version) • 160g ground almonds • 1 tsp baking powder (use gluten-free for GF version) • 1 tsp baking soda • 150g coconut oil • 150g maple syrup or date molasses • 1 tsp vanilla extract • 1 tsp almond extract • 125g punnet of fresh raspberries • 20g flaked almonds

These were a very popular breakfast muffin or snack on our first gut-health course. They can be easily made gluten-free and are very easy to eat! We've adjusted them slightly to make them more of a Bakewell-flapjack-muffin.

METHOD

1 Preheat the oven to 180°C fan/400°F/ gas 6.

2 Make the flax egg: Mix the flaxseeds with the water in a small bowl, and leave to sit while you prepare the other ingredients

3 Mix the dry ingredients: In a large bowl, mix the oats, flour, ground almonds, baking powder and baking soda.

4 Add the wet ingredients: Melt the coconut oil by heating it in a small pot. Add it to the dry ingredients along with the maple syrup or date molasses, vanilla and almond extract and the flax egg and mix thoroughly. Stir through 3/4 of the raspberries and 3/4 of the flaked almonds.

5 Divide and decorate: Line a 12-hole muffin tray with paper cases and divide the muffin mixture evenly between them. Decorate the tops of the muffins with the remaining flaked almonds and raspberries.

6 Bake and serve: Bake in the preheated oven for 25 minutes, then remove and leave to cool. ▸

CINNAMON SWIRLS

MAKES 8 swirls **PREP** 10 mins **COOKING** 20 mins

INGREDIENTS **Dough** • 200g self-raising flour • 35g icing sugar • 1/4 tsp salt • 80g cold vegan butter, cut into cubes, plus extra for the tin • 100ml oat milk **Cinnamon filling** • 2 tbsp vegan butter • 90g brown sugar • 1 tsp ground cinnamon • Cream cheese icing • 4 tbsp vegan cream cheese • 65g icing sugar • 1/4 tsp vanilla extract • 1 tsp oat milk

We make hundreds of cinnamon swirls every weekend in our bakery. They are our most popular treat by a distance! This version is so practical and quick to make. We have simplified the process so they don't require any proofing, as they have no yeast. You can bake these in the oven or even in an air fryer.

METHOD

1 Preheat the oven and grease the tin: Preheat the oven to 180°C fan/400°F/gas 6, or the air fryer on bake function to 160°C. Grease and line a 2lb (900g) loaf tin.

2 Prepare the dough: Add the self-raising flour, icing sugar and 1/4 teaspoon of salt to a mixing bowl, and stir together. Add the butter, and use your fingers to rub the butter into the flour mixture until it looks like damp sand or breadcrumbs. Stir in the milk. Using your hands or a wooden spoon. bring the dough together into a rough ball. Coat the dough in a little flour so it is easy to handle.

3 Dust your counter with flour, place the dough on it and knead for 2–3 minutes. Using a rolling pin, roll out into a rectangle roughly 45cm × 30cm.

4 Prepare the filling: Melt the butter. In a separate bowl, mix the cinnamon and sugar together. Using a pastry brush, spread the melted butter over the dough, bringing it right to the edges. Then sprinkle over the cinnamon sugar as evenly as you can.

5 Roll and cut the dough: Starting at the long end of the rectangle, roll the dough up tightly into a log. Cut the log in half, then halve both pieces, and then halve each remaining piece – you should have 8 evenly sized swirls. Place them in the loaf tin face up, so you can see the cinnamon layers.

6 Bake: Place the loaf tin into the preheated oven and bake for 25 minutes, or bake in the air fryer for 18–20 minutes.

7 Make the icing: While the rolls are in the oven, place the cream cheese in a bowl, then add the icing sugar, vanilla and milk. Use a fork to break it down and stir until smooth and super creamy.

CAULIFLOWER CURRY TRAY BAKE

SERVES 4 swirls **PREP** 10 mins **COOKING** 40 mins

INGREDIENTS **Sauce** • 3 cloves of garlic • 2cm piece of fresh ginger • 1 × 400g tin of coconut milk • 400ml vegetable stock • 11/2 tbsp medium curry powder • 1 tsp ground turmeric • 3 tbsp tamari or soy sauce • 1 tbsp maple syrup • juice of 1 lime **Veg** • 500g sweet potato • 1 × 400g tin of black beans • 6 vegan sausages, defrosted if from frozen • 1 medium leek • 1 head of cauliflower • 2 tbsp oil • 1 tbsp tamari or soy sauce • pinch of salt • 10g fresh coriander, basil, • flat parsley or chives

This is a really handy one-pan dish – simply prep all the veg, put them in a pan with the sauce, bake in the oven and that's it: delicious dinner ready! It's great served with rice or toast for a family dinner. You can substitute the veg here for pretty much any other veg that you have to hand.

METHOD

1 Preheat: Preheat your oven to 200°C fan/425°F/gas 7.

2 Prep the sauce: Peel the garlic and ginger. Roughly chop them, place in a blender with the coconut milk, vegetable stock, curry powder, turmeric, tamari or soy, maple syrup and lime juice and blend until smooth. Prep the veg: Cut the sweet potato into bite-sized pieces (leaving the skin on). Drain and rinse the black beans. Slice the sausages into bite-sized pieces. Slice the leek into 1–2cm rounds, washing thoroughly first to remove any hidden sediment.

3 Combine the veg and sauce: Place the chopped sweet potato, black beans, sliced sausages and leek into a large, deep oven dish. Pour the blended sauce over the vegetables and mix well.

4 Prep the cauliflower: Cut the cauliflower head into four equal-sized steaks from top to bottom. Place the steaks and any smaller pieces, including the leaves (thinly sliced), on a separate baking tray. Coat with 2 tablespoons of oil, drizzle with 1 tablespoon of tamari or soy sauce, and sprinkle with salt.

5 Bake: Place the casserole dish and the tray of cauliflower in the oven. Bake for 30–40 minutes, or until the sweet potato and cauliflower are tender and cooked through.

6 Chop the herbs: While the bake is in the oven, roughly chop your chosen fresh herb.

7 Garnish and serve: Once baked, remove both the dish and tray from the oven. Carefully place the roasted cauliflower steaks on top of the curry bake in the casserole dish. Garnish with the chopped herbs and serve hot. ▸

CRISPY TOFU THAI NOODLE SOUP

SERVES 2-3 **PREP** 15 mins **COOKING** 30 mins

INGREDIENTS **Crispy tofu** • 200g firm tofu • 2 tbsp tamari or soy sauce • 1 tbsp cornstarch • 1 tsp garlic powder • 1½ tbsp oil **Soup** • 200g rice noodles **Veg** • 1 red bell pepper • 1 carrot • 3 scallions or green onions • 1 handful of fresh coriander **Yellow curry paste sauce** • 1 clove of garlic, minced • 1-inch piece of ginger, peeled and grated • 1 red chilli • 1 stalk lemongrass • juice of 1 lime • 1 tbsp maple syrup • 15g fresh coriander (just the stalks) • 1 tsp ground turmeric • 2 tbsp tamari • 1 × 400ml can coconut milk • 400ml veg stock • salt and ground black pepper **Garnishes** • red chilli • peanuts or peanut rayu • sliced radishes • fresh lime wedges, for squeezing

Our kids love this! It's a super-tasty soup, straightforward to make and packed full of flavour. It makes a great dinner as well as lunch, and it's also good eaten cold for a meal on the go. Serving it with peanut rayu takes it to the next level!

METHOD

1 Prep the tofu: You can bake in the oven or air fryer. If using an oven, preheat to 200°C fan/425°F/gas 7. Cut the tofu into cubes, about 2cm × 2cm. In a bowl, toss the tofu with tamari or soy sauce, cornstarch and garlic powder until evenly coated. Place the tofu cubes in an air fryer basket or baking tray, making sure they are not touching each other for better airflow. Toss the tofu lightly in 1½ tablespoons of oil. Bake in the oven for 20 minutes or air fry at 200°C (390°F) for about 12 minutes. Shake the basket or tray halfway through. The tofu should be golden and crispy. Set aside.

2 Prep the noodles: Cook the rice noodles according to the package instructions. Drain and rinse under cold water to stop the cooking process, then set aside.

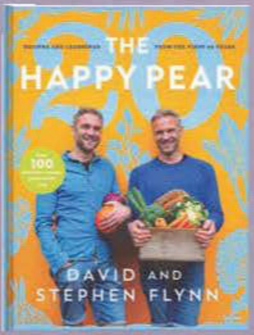
3 Prep the veg: Finely slice the red pepper and the carrot, slice the green onions into rounds and finely chop the coriander including the stalk. Keep some of the green onions and coriander back to garnish.

4 Make the soup: Place all the ingredients for the yellow curry paste sauce into a blender and blend until smooth. Add to a pot and bring to a gentle boil, then reduce the heat and simmer for about 10 minutes to allow the flavours to meld together. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

5 Assemble: Divide the cooked noodles between the serving bowls. Ladle the hot soup over the noodles, making sure to distribute the vegetables equally. Top each bowl with a portion of the crispy air-fried tofu.

6 Garnish and serve: Garnish with the peanut rayu, reserved sliced green onions and chopped coriander, sliced red chilli and sliced radishes.

7 Serve immediately, encouraging everyone to squeeze some lime juice over their soup to enhance the flavours.



The Happy Pear 20: Recipes and Learnings from the first 20 years, is on sale from 31st October, priced £23.99. Published by Gill Books.

THE BRIGHT Answer

ACHIEVE BIG THINGS THIS WINTER

Ben Bright loves a UK winter because it's the perfect time to slow things down a little and reap the triathlon performance benefits...

COACH BEN BRIGHT

As the former head coach of British Triathlon's Olympic Programme, Ben Bright oversaw our most successful Games to date. He's also a former triathlon Olympian (Sydney 2000) and is now the national coaching consultant for British Triathlon.

Coming from a warmer country [New Zealand], when I first moved to the UK I was baffled by actual winter training, and how people managed to survive the frozen months. Over time I've come to the realisation that not only is winter more than just something to be endured, there are benefits to be had from training in cold, wet, muddy, yucky weather, and we should embrace it.

For most endurance athletes winter is the time for development, when you work on your endurance and efficiency. You've got more time with no major races to prepare for. Training can seem less specific but that specificity should still be there, it's just at a lower bandwidth that tends to be broader.

The physiological systems that are developed during this time are the big ones that take time to respond and to see changes in: improved aerobic pathways, more efficient fat burning, improved heart pump capacity and musculo-skeletal robustness. These are the changes that support your higher-intensity work and will ultimately result in improved PBs and performances.

Because these changes take longer to occur, people doing research studies don't tend to like them, which is why you see lots of papers about the benefits of HIIT (high-intensity interval training) and not as many looking at longer-term, lower-intensity training.

A HIIT study can be done in four to six weeks and see measurable changes; a long-term study takes months and longer, and with the amount of variables you're introducing it's much harder to pick out discernible impact. But in my experience those long winter hours are the most important for building your base to support summer success.

This is borne out by the studies that have looked at the training histories of successful athletes over extended periods of time, sometimes over decades (Stephen Seiler is a good start point to this). In my experience if you can log a consistent amount of volume at the correct intensities and with sufficient recovery through the off-season, you will see consistent strong performances through the summer. Without those hours, or with too much middle to high intensity, you might hit one or two good performances but be patchy otherwise, or you just won't hit those highs you're looking for.

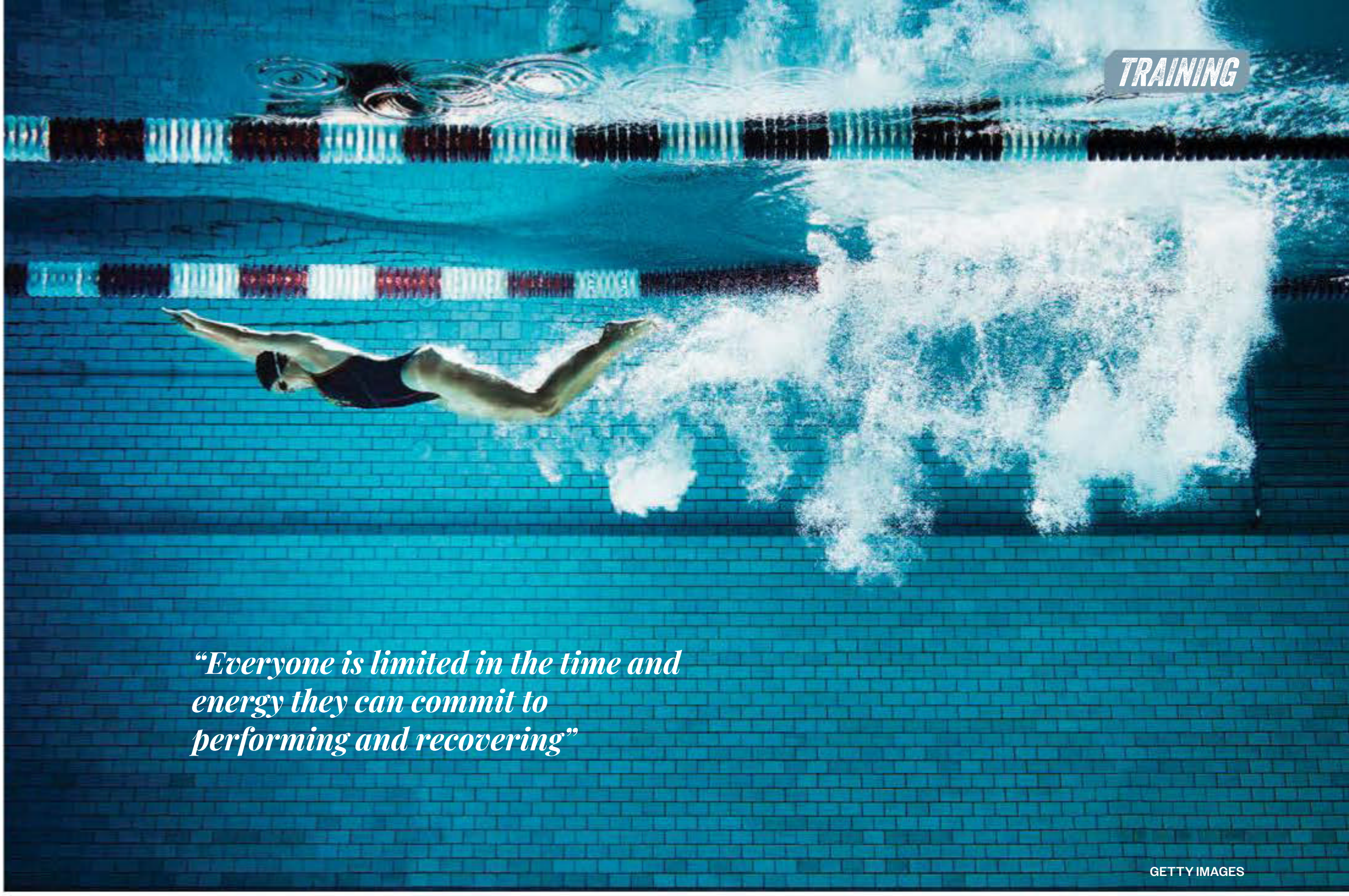
Where the Great British winter comes into play here is forcing you to train at the appropriate intensity. When it's cold and you're bundled up it feels more natural to be a bit slower and steady. You're a bit more restricted in your movement, surfaces are a bit more slippery, the light isn't as illuminating. It's the season telling you to slow it down a bit, take your time and enjoy the time outside.

> *"When it's cold and you're bundled up, it feels more natural to be slow and steady."*

It's also a great time to go off the beaten track on your runs, go mountain biking or gravel riding, explore a bit. Here in the UK, the weather is making that decision to go a bit slower for you. So embrace the winter months, wrap up well, put your lights on, get outside, get muddy, slow things down a bit and let the winter help you achieve your summer goals. 220

***Need advice from Ben? Send an email to** askben@220triathlon.com*

GETTY IMAGES



> *"Everyone is limited in the time and energy they can commit to performing and recovering"*

GETTY IMAGES

Q: I ONLY SWIM TWICE A WEEK AT THE MOMENT. SHOULD I BE DOING MORE?

Abigail Whyton, Dover

ANDREW SHEAFF

US swim coach Andrew Sheaff has been helping people of all ages improve their swimming for over 20 years. He specialises in coaching triathletes to help improve their swimming skills through online coaching.

A One of the challenges with improving in triathlon is that there are three disciplines to train for. With limited time and energy, it becomes a juggling act of managing competing demands. And whether the swim is your current focus, or you just want to do enough to maintain your progress, a common question is 'how often should I swim?'.

While the simple answer is 'more', because the more you swim, the more likely it is you'll improve, that's not a practical answer. Everyone is limited in the time and energy they can commit to performing and recovering from training. This is especially true when trying to be successful in multiple disciplines.

And specific to swimming, there's often a significantly larger time commitment associated with training. You usually have to transport yourself to a pool or body of water, you have to change, you have to train, etc. This is a bigger commitment than simply walking out the door for a run or a bike. Because each swim can be a big investment in time and energy, it's important to understand why you might want swim more often, and whether you should swim more often given your current goals and abilities.

Why Increase The Frequency?

I know it sounds obvious, but the more you swim, the more likely it is that you will improve. In particular, the more *often* you swim, the more likely it is that you will improve –and by this I mean number of sessions. Swimming is a skill, and skills are best learned when they are practiced more frequently.

If you're going to swim for 2 hours per week, you're going to learn at a faster rate swimming four times for 30 minutes as compared to two times for 1 hour. When it comes to learning any skill, frequency matters, and the same is true of swimming.

When Swimming More Often Makes Sense

The most important reason to swim more often is that you want to accelerate your swimming progress, particularly your skill development. When your focus is on improving your skills as quickly as you can, swimming more often is going to help you do that.

You don't even have to swim more. You just want to find ways to get into the water more times per week. The more exposure you get to swimming, the faster you'll improve. A very simple strategy is to take one or two of the current sessions you're performing and split them in half, performing amount of swimming across two days instead of one. This allows you to get more frequent practice without increasing the overall training load.

In contrast, if you're happy with your current skill level, or you're content with more consistent progress so you can focus on other areas of your training (or life!), swimming more often isn't the answer. You can consolidate your workouts into less frequent, but perhaps longer sessions.

Q: WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF TRAINING TO MUSIC? HOW DOES IT ENHANCE PERFORMANCE?

Susanne Anderson

JAMES WITTS

Former *220 Triathlon* magazine editor James is a cycling and sports writer, editor and author, and has written three books, including The Science of the Tour de France.

A Running to music, a podcast or audiobook is something many of us do, enjoying the audio accompaniment and blocking out the urban hum. But are there performance benefits to training to the beat? According to myriad studies, yes.

Take research out of the Netherlands by Robert Jan Bood, author of report *The Power of Auditory-Motor Synchronization in Sports: Enhancing Running Performance by Coupling Cadence with the Right Beats* (2013).

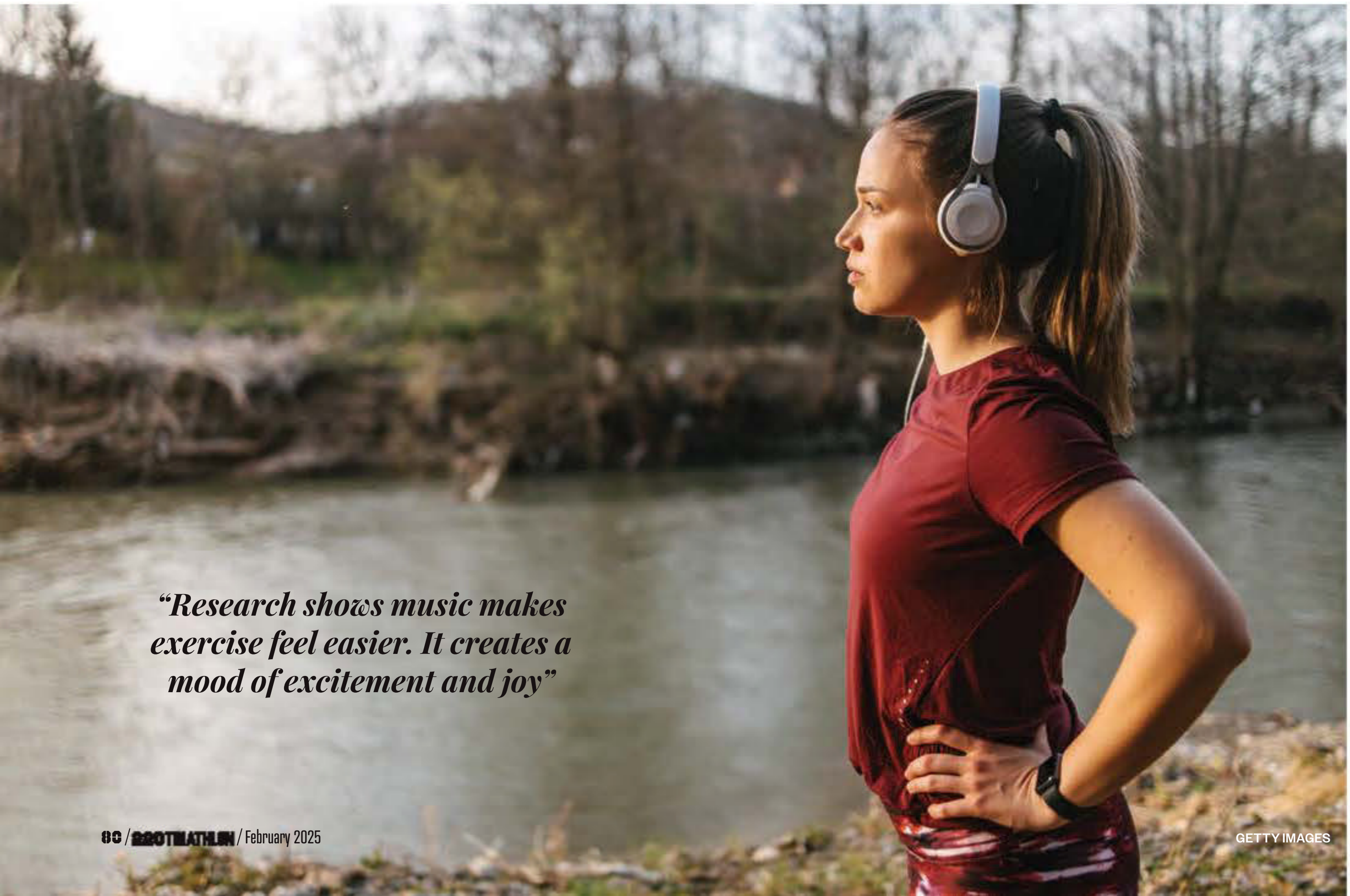
Bood showed that triathletes and runners can enjoy more accurate pacing strategies if they choose the right song at the right musical cadence to match their optimum striding cadence. This sounds a deep-dig task to isolate songs that'd suit your specific cadence, but it's broader than that with songs exceeding 120 beats per minute (bpm) recommended for high-intensity workouts and less than that for lower, high-volume efforts.

Run legend Haile Gebrselassie famously synced his run pace to the synapse-searing Scatman by Scatman John. Music's also been linked with getting you pumped up, elevating your feelings of joy and sending you into an optimum mindset to run hard and strong. (Just don't get too carried away by your big beats or you'll hit the wall.)

There's also research that shows music makes exercise feel easier. That's because music creates a mood of excitement and joy. In turn, negative physical aspects of exertion, like fatigue and tension, are alleviated and you feel like you can keep going when normally you might not. This distraction technique, of course, is a double-edged sword as that can raise safety issues. That's why it's clearly hard to recommend listening to music while cycling, especially in the urban environment. Indoors, though, crank it up to 11 and pedal on.

When it comes to running safely, there are several easy wins. The first is obvious: avoid noise-cancelling headphones. A better option is something like the headphones from Shokz, whose bone-conduction technology delivers music through your cheeks to keep your ears on alert for surrounding sounds.

One final word on training with music. Although it may help you, don't get too dependant on it… You won't be able to use music on triathlon race day so it pays to still have regular training sessions without your music on to get used to how it feels and to reassure yourself that you can still motivate yourself to keep moving once the beats stop pumping!



> *"Research shows music makes exercise feel easier. It creates a mood of excitement and joy"*

GETTY IMAGES

“Walking in cleats or socks is no fun and there’s no excuse for not having the basics on you to fix a tyre”

GETTY IMAGES

Q: I RECENTLY GOT CAUGHT OUT WITH A SLOW PUNCTURE. COULD I HAVE RIDDEN HOME ON IT?

Dan Collins

NIK COOK

Nikalas Cook is a writer, author, coach and athlete based in the Peak District. He specialises in health, fitness, endurance and adventure sports. He writes for multiple brands and has published two books.

A Your email tells us you made a call to home and got your other half to collect you, which was likely the right thing to do if you weren’t able to fix the tyre yourself – and here’s why.

If you’re running standard clincher tyres (which I’m guessing you were), the bottom line is don’t ride home! Firstly, as the tyre deflates, your rim becomes increasingly vulnerable to damage and it only takes a hidden pot-hole to cause an expensive irreparable ding.

Secondly – and much more crucially – bike handling and control will deteriorate as air escapes and, no matter how carefully you’re nursing your bike home, a rolled tyre will almost inevitably result in a close encounter with the tarmac.

The best advice if you find yourself stranded without the correct kit is to make the call of shame home for assistance, as you did!

Tubular tyres and tubeless tyres with a protective insert – such as the Vittoria Air-Liner– can be ridden more safely ‘soft’ but risk to bike and body is still significant. I’d still be making a grovelling call to my better half/friend/family member.

A better learning here is to educate yourself on how to fix a flat tyre and to make sure you have the correct kit packed away on your bike somewhere.

Always, even if you’re only riding a local loop, carry the spares needed to fix a flat or minor mechanical and practice to make sure you can do it unaided. This will also pay dividends should you get a puncture during a race, when in most situations you will not be allowed any outside assistance to fix it. A flat tyre can end your race if you don’t know how to deal with it, which is a shame after months of training (not to mention the cost of many race entries).

Walking in cleats or in your socks is no fun however and there’s really no excuse for not having the basics on you. Even if it’s just some tyre levers, a spare tube and a CO2 inflator, it hardly takes up a lot of jersey or tri-suit pocket real estate. However, if you’re a bit absent-minded, just stick a small saddlebag on with the above packed in. There’s a wide range of small ones available which can sit on your top tube or just behind the saddle. Once on you’ll likely forget it’s there.

It might not look ‘pro’ admittedly but neither does tottering along in your bike shoes or trying to ride on a flat!

Finally, practise until you can do it smoothly. Getting together with a club for a ‘bike skills’ session is a good idea as then others can benefit too!

GETTY IMAGES

Q: SHOULD I BE PLANKING IN TRAINING? WHAT'S THE BENEFIT FOR TRIATHLON?

Peter Dixon

BRAD BEER
Brad Beer is an APA-titled sports and exercise physiotherapist, founder of POGO Physio, best-selling author of 'You CAN Run Pain Free!', and host of The Physical Performance Show weekly podcast.

A The plank is an isometric bodyweight exercise that strengthens the stabilizing muscles of the shoulder, trunk and hips against gravity.

Traditionally, the plant is performed on either the hands or forearms with both feet on the floor, holding the body off the ground for as long as possible. The beauty of the plank is that it can be modified to suit the specific needs of triathletes to boost swimming, cycling and running performance. And unlike traditional core exercises such as the sit-up, planks don't place high compressive loads on the lumbar vertebrae, making it a great option for those with lower back pain.

To get the most out of the plank, it's important to keep the body in a straight line from head to toe. This means not sagging through the shoulders and lower back, or lifting the hips too high.

Your supporting hand/elbow should be stacked directly underneath your shoulders. Avoid holding your breath and squeeze your glutes to bring your pelvis into a slight posterior tilt to avoid excessive lumbar extension. Avoid holding your breath – we breathe when cycling, swimming and running so there's no need to do this.

If you are new to plank, then modify the moveement to make it easier and to avoid the risk of injury or of getting frustrated and giving up, for example by keeping your knees on the floor.

The good news? Once you get it right, the plank can benefit all of the triathlon disciplines. Here are some more sport-specific benefits:

Swimming
Planking challenges the stabilising muscles of the shoulder, which can improve power through the catch and pull. It can also improve energy transfer from the upper body to shoulder to core and hips as we rotate.

Cycling
Maintaining a time-trial position requires solid abdominal and erector spinae muscle strength and endurance. Planking is a great way to work on this, improving comfort and control.

Running
The side plank has also been shown to be one the best exercises for activating the gluteus medius muscle. Deficiencies in this muscle are linked to running-related injuries, such as ITB syndrome, shin splints, and gluteal tendinopathy.

You can always increase the duration and frequency of planking, however, the best way to progress planking is to add dynamic challenge and vary positions. This is not only less boring, but works a greater number of muscles in ways that can take your triathlon performance to the next level. For example progress to side plank or a reverse plank to work the obliques and posterior chain, or plank on an unstable surface, adding in arm and leg movements. 220

220 TRIATHLON

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NEXT MONTH

On sale – 22 January

THE ULTIMATE BIKE FIT GUIDE

How to make sure you're riding efficiently (and comfortably!)

WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH...

Pro tips from the best at racing hard: Hector Pardoe, Teo Geoghan Hart and Jasmin Paris

ON TEST

Winter swim kit for the coldest months, plus women's run jackets

HOW WAS IT FOR YOU?

A DATE WITH THE GODS

Our man Sean has headed back to Greece for one of his favourite races – Olympusman. But will fate and his training see him victorious on the famous mountain? ▸

WORDS SEAN MCFARLANE **IMAGE** DIMITRIS CONSTANTINOU

As the run course hugs the hillside and contours around the mountain, I see a few others ahead through the pine trees. It's always good to have a target and I'm gaining on them, slowly. My various aches however are increasing in both number and severity. My smile reluctantly turns into a grimace.

The terrain eases though and the rocky surface changes to smooth pine needle laden dirt and I try to find that all-so-important run rhythm — always challenging after a swim and bike. I want to check in with my legs and see where they are at. It's like listening to the engine of my lawnmower once I've managed to start it up, hoping it won't conk out.

Just as I'm getting into my stride, the rocks return, and the brain needs engaging again. I've never been a great multitasker and it's clear early on that technical terrain and trying to drink from bottles do not mix. There's no doubting this is spectacular stuff, with the far-away coastline of this sun-drenched island coming into view at regular intervals.

I'm running around Mount Olympus in Cyprus and on the final leg of their aptly named Olympusman triathlon. I've done this race several times before though my last effort was some five years ago. Like my legs, my memory is fading with age. My "oh this is a good bit" thoughts are outnumbered by "I don't remember this part" ones. My brain seems to have conveniently forgotten the toughest parts, too.

Olympusman is perhaps the ultimate season

MATT SEAN

Sean McFarlane was runner-up in the inaugural Celtman, City to Summit and Brutal extreme triathlons. He runs This Way Up Media, a film production company, and Athletico Management with Dougie Vipond and Andy McCandlish.

An early start and choppy water kicked off 2024's Olympusman

▲ Rough waters saw the swim field spread out as athletes tried to sight over the swell.

extender race for us in Europe. There are very few, if any, places where you can race such an event in November. British summer time just about hangs on long enough to squeeze in the required training. For me, I'd managed some decent preparation but knew all too well that I was lacking a good bit of the type of biking needed here – sustained climbing. I also had had my first DNF in an extreme triathlon in my previous race and that made things all feel a bit different from usual. Would I get round this time? I'd had big nutrition problems during that race and I came away from it adamant that I needed to use much more real food. But that was a full-distance race and this was a half so I decided to stick with nutrition products and hope I'd get away with it over the shorter distance. Nevertheless, it all seemed too close to the definition of insanity — doing the same thing again and again and expecting a different result! My nerves were definitely heightened.

INTO CHOPPY WATERS

Pre-race the main challenge is to avoid taking full advantage of the all-inclusive element at my hotel. I just about manage not to overindulge. My aim for the race first and foremost is completion. Looking back, that's been the case for every extreme triathlon I've done. Five years ago, I somehow managed to win this race but things feel very different now and I'm fine with that. Age group victory is always a thought these days but as they hand me my whistle and safety blanket at registration, I'm reminded that survival is first.

As expected, race day weather is set dry and bright. Even in November, temperatures reach the mid-twenties during the day but very helpfully it cools as you ascend. T2 was set for around 15 degrees. The start and T1 at the harbour area of Paphos is a jolly scene with plenty of smiles and laughter. The odd bleary-eyed hotel resident looks on, not quite sure what to make of things. I chat briefly with Willy Wilson, a Brit based here. He's an experienced athlete who looks a good bit younger than me but must have great skin products as he's in my age category. I catch sight of his rather slick-looking TT bike. Hmm... Of the many extreme triathlons I've done, bike choice is always a big topic and looking around, there's a real mix. I've gone for a bike that I used for both road and gravel rides. That means I ride it a lot and crucially it's comfortable.

I see race organiser Mike Hadjioannou, all smiles and energy as usual. No sooner do I shake hands with him than the wind whips up, blowing over the feather flags and a few bikes. The sea state quickly changes too. This is very unexpected. I look at Mike and shrug. "We go," he says. Fair enough. Entering the water feels a bit like jumping into the high seas. I don't mind these conditions – I can swim poorly in anything, aha – but it's properly rough.

The field quickly spreads out as we head to the first buoy, which is hard to sight in the swell. My survival aim kicks in early. This a 'just get it done' job. I do and come out about halfway. In transition I meet Tony from a local cycle hire company. We talk briefly about the unexpected weather and he informs me that the mountain will be treacherous. I put on what feels like far too little kit for such conditions and head off.

INTO THE MOUNTAINS

The bike course is spectacular but tough. With almost 2500 metres of climbing in just 84 kilometres, it punches deep into the Cypriot countryside, through the tiny villages with their citrus trees and tavernas and up into the pine forests of the Troodos mountains. It takes almost 40 kilometres before the real climbing begins. I see a couple of other competitors stopped at the first aid station in Kedares, looking up in awe at the chalky ▶

▼ From gravel to TT bikes and everything in between, it was a real mix of tech coming out of T2.

HOW WAS IT FOR YOU?

"The road rises again. I'm on my own and pacing is tricky"

scrapped hillside which signals the road ahead now ramping up. Structural fatigue is my biggest concern here and I can feel my lower back isn't entirely comfortable with proceedings. I find my easiest gear and spin. There's rain around and wind but as a Scot I can't complain. I see a local rider who has had enough, sitting by the roadside. He looks properly cold. These very un-Cyprus like conditions suit me just fine but the solid, steady and sustained climbing is a challenge. I feel like I'm taking this very easy.

The ascent eventually flattens off and after some faster traversing on yet more wonderfully smooth tarmac, the road rises again. I'm on my own now and pacing is tricky. It's noticeably cooler too but I'm warm enough. There are four aid stations on the bike course where you send your nutrition to, but I soon realise I've made a mistake as I thought the last aid station was further on. I reach it with a still pretty full bottle so decide to gulp down what I have left. Unsurprisingly my stomach doesn't thank me and the last climb section from the village of Prodromos is particularly tough. I know the run course well and respect the challenge of it. Spinning is once more the order of the day. Come to think of it, it's been like that for a while.

I know there are a couple of competitors just ahead of me as I start the run. It's a great boost when, like the submarine captain looking through his periscope, I get eyes on target. I pick up my pace and go past them hard. It lifts my spirits, but I know I'm well back in the field. I'm trying to take nutrition at regular intervals, but it doesn't sit particularly well. I have an emergency bag of jelly babies but I hold off for now. Running well over the changing singletrack terrain I pick off a few others. As expected, my progression gradually slows. I've told plenty of people about the run course and for good reason. It's utterly fabulous, winding through the trees, round the mountain and up onto the summit. The intake of Jelly Babies signals my deterioration but I'm comforted by knowing I'll get to the finish on this one. The weather has settled and I head skywards for the last kilometre, climbing steeply to the summit finish at 2000 metres.

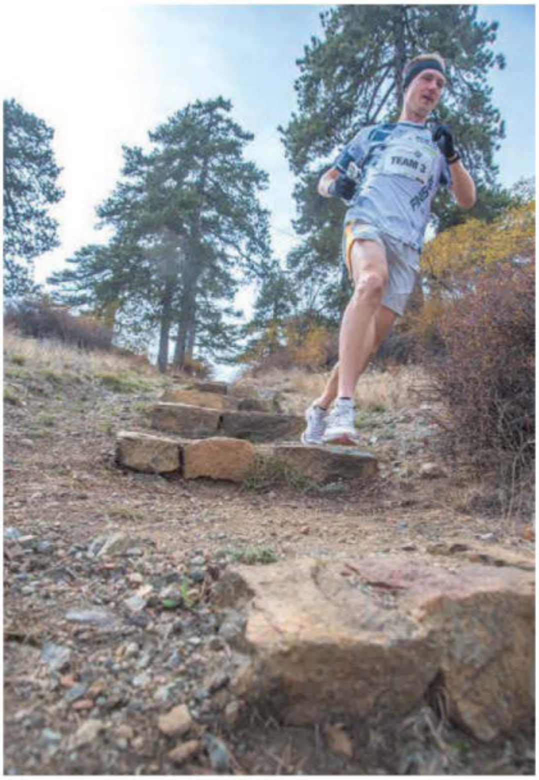
▲ Olympusman ian't a race to enter if you don't like hills – but the views make up for the pain!

SPECIAL MOMENTS

I finished 14th in 7 hours and 23 minutes. Willie was just ahead of me and I was second V50. Happy to have reached the finish line, I'd forgotten what an amazing place it is – under the ski lifts on Cyprus' highest point having immersed yourself in this magnificent island and finally looking down upon so much of it. I knew I'd taken the bike easy – I was over 40 minutes slower than my quickest time in previous races for that leg – and that made a big difference to my placing. Perhaps I gave the run too much respect, but the reality is my biking form is slowing with age. I should really spend the winter trying to fix my nutrition too – we'll see.

If and buts aside, it'd been a real pleasure to return; older but perhaps not much wiser. A personal highlight

▲ Trails make up much of the run as the track winds around and up to the summit.



for me having been involved in this race when it first started back in 2015 was seeing the rising number of local Cypriot athletes taking part. Triathlon remains a small sport here, but its numbers are very much growing. Those that take part exhibit an impressive and infectious energy for the sport. They're great ambassadors for both triathlon and outdoor activity in Cyprus.

Positive people with positive energy is a simple and powerful combination. People like Andreas Efstathiou who has done the race every year since 2015 bar two (remember Covid?!). And Andreas Agathokleous who was runner up for the second year in a row. He was on his knees at the end in tears and clutching his kids. Many others were similarly emotional at the summit finish. Seeing what the race has become and how much it means to so many competitors was fantastic – and made my return to Olympusman even more special.

I HAVE WHAT IT TAKES.

I HAVE WHAT IT TAKES.

I HAVE WHAT IT TAKES.

I HAVE WHAT IT TAKES.

I HAVE WHAT IT TAKES.

I HAVE WHAT IT TAKES.

LET'S GO

RACE WEBSITE

www.activatecyprus.com

HOW TO GET THERE

Several airlines fly direct to Paphos all year round from the UK. I flew from Edinburgh with Easyjet.

WHERE TO STAY

There are many good hotels in and around the race start at Paphos harbour. I stayed at the Leonardo Plaza Cypria Maris Beach: www.leonardo-hotels.com

RACE LOGISTICS

Although some competitors had supporters, you don't need any to do the race. The organisers transport any nutrition that you need to the aid stations on both the bike and run. There are four aid stations on the bike and three on the run. Transport is also provided for you and your bike back to the harbour from the finish.

BIKE HIRE

www.aspirecyclingcyprus.com

HOW TO MAKE A WEEK OF IT

Cyprus is well known as a holiday destination. It's a great place to combine racing with a family holiday and early November is a superb time to visit. With temperatures consistently in the mid-twenties, the ocean is warm too. The road cycling is excellent with quiet roads on very good surfaces and once you head inland, plenty of hills. Riding in the Cedar Valley area is particularly special. They drive on the left too! *visitpafos.org.cy*

220 2025 RACE CALENDAR

PICK YOUR RACES AND PLAN YOUR SEASON WITH THE 220 EVENT GUIDE

CELTMAN EXTREME SCOTTISH TRIATHLON

14 JUNE 2025

Take on the race that many claim is 'tougher than Norseman' at your peril…

XTRI WORLD TOUR

MARCH 2025

2 FROSTY AQUATHLON
(various dists)
Littlehampton,
West Sussex.
tuff-fitty.co.uk

16 THE DRAFT-LEGAL 'CHILLY' DUATHLON
(🔴 SPRINT)
(5km R/20.5km B/3km R)
Castle Combe Circuit,
Chippenham, Wiltshire.
dbmax.co.uk

23 ELY 115 SQUADRON DUATHLON
(various dists)
Ely, Cambridgeshire.
elytriclub.co.uk

LINGWOOD DUATHLON
(various distances and events)
Lingwood Village Hall,
Norwich. *tri-anglia.club*

TRIWORKS EAST FORTUNE DUATHLON
(🟢 SPRINT)
(various distances and events)
East Fortune race track,
Edinburgh, Scotland.
tri-works.co.uk

30 OULTON PARK DUATHLON
(🟢 STANDARD)
(various dists)
Oulton Park Race Track, Little Budworth,
Tarporley, Cheshire.
opevents.co.uk

APRIL

6 NORTHUMBERLAND DUATHLON
(🔴 STANDARD)
(various dists)
Druridge,
Northumberland.
vo2maxracingevents.co.uk

13 DYFI DASH TRIATHLON
(400m S/20km B/5km R) Bro Dyfi Leisure Centre, Machynlleth.
ceristtriathlon.org.uk

WEST LANCASHIRE SPRING TRIATHLON & DUATHLON
(various distances and events)
Edge Hill University,
Ormskirk.
epicevents.co.uk

STRATFORD TRIATHLON
(various distances)
Stratford University,
Stratford. *uktriathlon.co.uk*

19 ACTIVE TRAINING WORLD MALLORY PARK DUATHLON
(🟢 SPRINT)
(various dists)
Mallory Park Circuit,
Kirkby Mallory,
Leicestershire.
atwevents.co.uk

26 CLUMBER PARK DUATHLON
(🟢 STANDARD) (various dists) Clumber Park,
East Midlands.
trisociety.co.uk

27 HARROGATE SPRINT TRI & AQUATHLON
(various dists & events)
Harrogate, North Yorks.
harrogatetriathlonclub.co.uk

🟢 EUROPEAN CHAMPS QUALIFIER 🔴 WORLD CHAMPS QUALIFIER

MAY

4 HORWICH TRIATHLON & DUATHLON
(various distances and events) Horwich Leisure Centre, Bolton.
epicevents.co.uk

5 TADCASTER TRI (various dists)
Tadcaster, North Yorks.
evensplits.events/tadtri

THAMES TURBO SPRINT TRIATHLON
(426m S/21.5km B/5km R) Hampton Open Air Pool, London.
thamesturbo.co.uk

10 CHESHIRE KIDS FUN DUATHLON
(various dists)
Barony Park, Nantwich.
uktriathlon.co.uk

11 EARLY BRIGG SPRINT TRIATHLON
(400m S/20km B/5km R)
Ancholme Leisure Centre, Brigg, Lincs.
fastfwdsports.co.uk

EAST GRINSTEAD TRIATHLON
(various distances and events)
The Kings Centre, East Grinstead, West Sussex.
egtriclub.com/triathlon

ROYAL WOOTTON BASSETT SPRINT TRIATHLON
(400m S/20km B/5km R)
Lime Kiln Leisure Centre, Swindon, Wiltshire.
royalwoottonbassetthounds.co.uk

TELFORD TRIATHLON AND AQUATHLON
(various distances and events)
Much Wenlock Leisure Centre, Shropshire.
telfordtri.co.uk

CHESHIRE TRIATHLON
(various distances and events)
Barony Park, Nantwich.
uktriathlon.co.uk

17-18 OUTLAW HALF NOTTINGHAM WEEKEND (● SPRINT) (various distances and events)
National Water Sports Centre, Nottingham. Nottinghamshire.
outlawtriathlon.com

18 SOUTHPORT TRIATHLON AND DUATHLON (● STANDARD TRIATHLON)
(various distances and events)
Waterside Lodge, Southport.
epicevents.co.uk

25 DORNEY LAKE TRIATHLON (● SPRINT)
(various distances)
Dorney Lake, Windsor, Berkshire.
dorneylakeevents.com

DARLEY MOOR MAY SPRINT DUATHLON (● SPRINT)
(4.8km R/18.3km B/2.4km R)
Darley Moor Race Track, Ashbourne, Derbyshire.
crazylegsevents.co.uk

31 HENLEY KIDS FUN TRIATHLON
(various dists)
Henley Leisure Centre, Oxfordshire.
uktriathlon.co.uk

JUNE

1 COVENTRY SPRINT TRIATHLON
(400m swim/20km B/5km R)
Xcel Leisure Centre, Coventry, West Midlands.
epicevents.co.uk

31 HENLEY TRIATHLON
(various dists)
Henley Leisure Centre, Oxfordshire.
uktriathlon.co.uk

DEVA TRIATHLON (● AQUABIKE) (various distances and events)
Grosvenor Park,

BLENHEIM PALACE TRIATHLON

BLENHEIM PALACE TRIATHLON

7-8 JUNE 2025

One of the nation's oldest and most popular multisporting weekends, set in the grounds of the magnificent UNESCO World Heritage Site.

IRONMAN 70.3 BOLTON
8 JUNE 2025
Experience a warm northern welcome at this middle-distance humdinger.

GETTY IMAGES FOR IRONMAN

Chester, Cheshire. *chestertri.org.uk*

7-8

NORTHUMBERLAND FESTIVAL OF SPORT (various distances and events) Druridge Bay Country Park, Morpeth, Northumberland. *vo2maxracingevents.co.uk*

BLENHEIM PALACE TRIATHLON (🟢 SPRINT) (various distances and events) Blenheim Palace, Woodstock, Oxfordshire. *blenheimtriathlon.com*

8

EASTBOURNE TRIATHLON (🟢 STANDARD) (various distances) Eastbourne, East Sussex. *eastbournetriathlon.co.uk*

IRONMAN 70.3 BOLTON (1.9km S/90km B/21.1km R) Bolton, Greater Manchester. *ironman.com*

THE SLATEMAN TRIATHLON AND DUATHLON (🟢 STANDARD DUATHLON) (various distance and events) Llanberis, Wales. *alwaysaimhighevents.com*

14

ALDERFORD KIDS FUN TRIATHLON (various dists) Alderford Lake, Whitchurch *uktriathlon.co.uk*

14

ALDERFORD TRIATHLON (various dists) Alderford Lake, Whitchurch *uktriathlon.co.uk*

22

CARDIFF TRIATHLON (🔴 STANDARD) (various distances and events) Cardiff Bay, Wales. *alwaysaimhighevents.com*

29

ULTIMATE TRIATHLON (full distance and relay) The Mere, Ellesmere, Shropshire. *uktriathlon.co.uk*

ULTIMATE HALF TRIATHLON (half full distance and relay) The Mere, Ellesmere, Shropshire. *uktriathlon.co.uk*

ULTIMATE QUARTER TRIATHLON (quarter full distance and relay) The Mere, Ellesmere, Shropshire. *uktriathlon.co.uk*

JULY

5-6

OUTLAW HALF HOLKHAM WEEKEND

🟢 EUROPEAN CHAMPS QUALIFIER 🔴 WORLD CHAMPS QUALIFIER (various distances and events) Holkham Hall, Wells-next-the-sea, Norfolk. *outlawtriathlon.com*

WOODHORN MUSEUM TRIATHLON (🔴 SPRINT) (various distances and events) Woodhorn Museum, Ashington, Northumberland *vo2maxracingevents.co.uk*

6 CROYDE OCEAN TRIATHLON (various distances) Putsborough, Devon. *croydeocean.co.uk*

12 ARTIC ONE TRI AND PARA-TRI FESTIVAL (🔴 AQUABIKE) (various distances and events) Dorney Lake, Windsor, Berkshire. *arctic1.co.uk*

UPTON TRIATHLON AND DUATHLON (🔴 SPRINT DUATHLON) (various distances) Fish Meadow, Upton-upon-Severn, Worcs. *uptontriathlon.com*

13 IRONMAN 70.3 SWANSEA (1.9km S/90km B/21.1km R) Swansea, Wales. *ironman.com*

19 BIRMINGHAM TRIATHLON (various dists) Boldmere Gate, Sutton Park, Sutton Coldfield. *uktriathlon.co.uk*

19-20

BELVOIR CASTLE MULTISPORT FESTIVAL (🔴 STANDARD DUATHLON) (various distances and events) Belvoir Castle, Leicestershire. *castleraceseries.com*

26-27

OUTLAW TRIATHLON WEEKEND (various distances and events) National Water Sports Centre, Nottingham. Nottinghamshire. *outlawtriathlon.com*

27 IRONMAN LEEDS (3.8km S/180km b/42.2km R) Leeds, Yorkshire. *ironman.com*

ETON DORNEY SPRINT TRIATHLON (🟢 SPRINT) (750m S/20km B/ 5km R) Dorney Lake, Windsor, Berkshire. *dbmax.co.uk*

AUGUST

16 YORK KIDS FUN TRIATHLON (various dists) York Sports Village, York. *uktriathlon.co.uk*

17 BLITHFIELD TRIATHLON (🔴 AQUABIKE) (various distances and events) Blithfield Reservoir Staffordshire. *pma-racing.co.uk*

YORK TRIATHLON (various dists) York Sports Village, York. *uktriathlon.co.uk*

31 SHROPSHIRE TRIATHLON (various dists) The Mere, Cremorne Gardens, Ellesmere. *uktriathlon.co.uk*

SHROPSHIRE MIDDLE DISTANCE (middle distance) The Mere, Cremorne Gardens, Ellesmere. *uktriathlon.co.uk*

HEVER CASTLE TRIATHLON

28 SEPTEMBER 2025

A great weekend for all the family, with activities for all ages and fantastic crowd support.

CASTLE TRIATHLON SERIES

CROYDE OCEAN TRI

6 JULY 2025

Consistently picked as one of our top races of the year, a sea swim starts and a warm welcome finishes this race.

CROYDE OCEAN TRIATHLON

SEPTEMBER

7 SWYD SPRINT TRIATHLON (🔴 SPRINT) (750m S/20km B/5km R) Barry Island, Wales. *allornothingevents.com*

FLEET FEET TRIATHLETES (🔴 STANDARD) (1.5km S/42km B/10km R) Knockburn Loch, Aberdeen, Scotland. *fleet-feet.com*

NEWBURY TRIATHLON (300m S (pool)/22km B/5km R) Newbury. *triathlon@newburyvelo.cc*

13 NORTH WEST KIDS FUN DUATHLON (various distances) Barony Park, Nantwich. *uktriathlon.co.uk*

14 IRONMAN 70.3 WEYMOUTH (1900m S/90km b/21.1km R) Weymouth, Dorset. *ironman.com*

CHELTENHAM TRIATHLON (various distances) Sandford Parks Lido, Cheltenham, Glos. *sandfordparkslido.org*

NORTH WEST TRIATHLON (various distances) Barony Park, Nantwich. *uktriathlon.co.uk*

21 IRONMAN WALES (3.8km S/180km b/42.2km R) Tenby, Wales. *ironman.com*

28 HEVER CASTLE TRIATHLON AND MULTISPORT FESTIVAL (🔴 STANDARD TRI) (various dists and events) Hever Castle, Kent. *castleraceseries.com*

SALCOMBE GIN SPRINT TRIATHLON (700m S/19km B/3km R) Salcombe, Devon. *letsgovelo.co.uk*

WARWICKSHIRE TRIATHLON (various distances) Stratford Leisure Centre, Stratford-upon-Avon. *uktriathlon.co.uk*

OCTOBER

5 THRUXTON MASS ATTACK DUATHLON (🟢 SPRINT) (various distances) Thruxton Motor Circuit, Hants. *challenging.events*

NOVEMBER

2 DEVON DUATHLON (🔴 STANDARD) (various distances) Roadford Lake, Broadwoodwidger, Devon. *sportivaevents.co.uk*

🟢 **EUROPEAN CHAMPS QUALIFIER** 🔴 **WORLD CHAMPS QUALIFIER**

XTRI WORLD TOUR DATES

Find more information about the XTRI World Tour 2025 and enter the events online at: ***xtriworldtour.com***

MAY

10 HIMALAYAN XTREME TRI
(full distance) Nepal.

18 GREEK HERO XTRI SOLO POINT FIVE
(half distance) Corfu.

JUNE

14 CELTMAN! EXTREME SCOTTISH TRIATHLON
(full distance) Scotland.

21 SWISSMAN XTREME TRI
(half distance) Switzerland.

21 CELTMAN! XTRI SOLO POINT FIVE
(half distance) Scotland

JULY

3 SWEDEMAN XTRI SOLO POINT FIVE
(half distance) Sweden.

5 SWEDEMAN XTREME TRIATHLON
(full distance) Sweden.

12 ORAVAMAN XTRI SOLO POINT FIVE
(half distance) Slovakia.

AUGUST

2 NORSEMAN XTREME TRIATHLON WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP RACE
(full distance) Norway.

2 STARVATION XTREME TRIATHLON
(full distance) USA.

23 THE RESTLESS GRAVEL XTREME TRIATHLON
(New event) Scotland.

SEPTEMBER

5 ICON XTREME TRIATHLON
(full distance) Italy.

6 JÁNOŠÍK XTREME TRIATHLON
(full distance) Slovakia.

11 BLACKLAKE XTRI SOLO POINT FIVE
(half distance) Montenegro.

13 BLACKLAKE XTREME TRI
(full distance) Montenegro.

21 GOLDEN XTRI
(details TBC) Columbia.

27 FODAXMAN XTRI SOLO POINT FIVE
(half distance) Brazil.

OCTOBER

TBC CANADAMAN XTREME TRIATHLON
(full distance) Canada.

TBC CANADA XTRI SOLO POINT FIVE
(half distance) Canada.

11 GREEK HERO XTRI
(full distance) Corfu.

NOVEMBER

TBC HIMALAYAN XTRI SOLO POINT FIVE
(half distance) Nepal.

TBC FORMOSA XTREME TRI
(full distance) Taiwan.

DECEMBER

13 FODAXMAN XTREME TRIATHLON
(full distance) Brazil.

Scan the **QR code below** for moe info and to enter your XTRI World Tour event:

RESTLESS
XTREME GRAVEL TRIATHLON
XTRI GRAVEL

WANT TO LIST YOUR 2025 RACE(S) IN THE NEXT ISSUE?

Simply email **events@220triathlon.com** with the event name, date, distance on offer (write 'various dists' and/or 'and events' if multiple), location (venue, nearest town and county) and the website.

HOW DO TRIATHLON TRANSITIONS WORK?

FAQ You swim, you bike and you run, but, until race day arrives, it's rare to combine two, let alone three, of the disciplines. And that's a mistake because transition, aka 'the fourth discipline', is the place where you can make the greatest gains with the smallest effort. Whatever your ability, mastering the essentials of transition set-up and layout will make a big difference to your race-day effectiveness. Read on to find out how.

1. SWIM TO BIKE

Once you're out of the water, pull your wetsuit down to your waist to make running easier. Wait until you reach your transition slot before pulling your suit down below your waist. Stand on the loose suit with your heel and use your free leg to step out of the suit. Run with your bike, holding it by the handlebars or the saddle. Use your momentum to hop one leg over and on to the saddle in one smooth movement. Ensure you're in the appropriate gear to build up speed smoothly as soon as you're on the bike. Use elastic bands to keep your shoes facing upwards for a quick entry. Build up enough speed to coast as you lean down, open the shoe wide and put your foot in. Pull your shoe on using the heel strap then close the shoe securely before starting on the other

2. BIKE TO RUN

Gauge your speed so you can dismount smoothly and start running immediately. Guide your bike by the saddle and bars if transition is busy or your legs are unsteady. Roll your bike to your slot and rack your bike quickly by hanging it on the brake levers. Have all your run gear to hand so you can get it on in as few movements as possible. A quick check to see you're not in anyone's way, and you're off!

CHALLENGE FAMILY

WAGNER AROUJO

TRI SPEAK

Wondering what the ‘washing machine’ is, or where to find your M-dot?! Make things easy with our guide to common tri terms…

‘A’-Race The most important race of your season

Age-grouper Non-pro triathlete

Aerobic Aerobic exercise involves oxygen consumption by the body

Anaerobic How much energy your body can produce without using oxygen

Aquabike Race with just swim and bike elements, no run

Bilateral breathing Breathing every three strokes when swimming

Biomechanics The forces applied to your body during exercise

Bonking Running out of energy mid-race or training session

Brick session When you ‘brick’ two disciplines together, e.g. bike and run

Cadence Pedal rate on bike, in revolutions per minute (rpm)

Carb-loading Eating a carb-heavy meal prior to a race to boost energy

Catch The part of the swim stroke where you pull on the water

Core strength Development of the stomach and lower back area in support of strength

DNS/DNF Did not start, did not finish – abbreviations found in race results

DOMS Delayed onset muscle soreness (after racing or training)

DQ Disqualified, abbreviation in race results

Drafting Hitching a ride on someone else’s slipstream in the bike or swim

Drag The amount of turbulent displaced air that an object creates, resulting in a slowing effect

Duathlon Usually a run/bike/run

Electrolyte drink Contains sodium and potassium to help your body hydrate

Elite Another word for a professional athlete

Glycemic index A ranking system for carbohydrates based on their effect on blood glucose levels

HIT High-intensity training

HRmax Your maximum heart rate. Occurs when digging deep!

Hyponatremia A deficiency of sodium found in the blood

Intervals Intensive training using repeated on/off efforts

Kona Place in Hawaii where Ironman World championships are held every October

Lactic acid Produced in high-intensity workouts, it can inhibit oxygen movement around the body and slow you down

DANIEL JAMES MEDIA

Low glycogen training Training without taking on carbohydrates to increase the body’s ability to burn fat

Main set A block lasting 40-50% of a session where the heart rate is elevate.d

M-dot Abbreviation for the Ironman logo

Midfoot strike When running, your front foot strikes the ground flat – as opposed to toe or heel first

Muscular endurance Your muscles’ ability to produce a given level of force for an extended duration

Negative split Completing the second part, e.g a run lap, faster than the first

Overpronation Foot rolls inwards on impact rather than outwards

Overtraining Common symptoms of training too much with inefficient recovery include insomnia, headaches, moodiness, loss of enthusiasm, and increased illness due to a suppressed immune system

PB Personal best

Pronation The natural ‘turning in’ of the foot

Power output Measured in watts on your bike

Pull The mid part of the swim stroke where the hands and arms accelerate using the purchase from the catch

Reps Pre-fixed distances covered and pre-fixed recoveries maintained

Rest interval (RI) Period of rest between reps

Sculling Swim drills that use your hands alone to propel you forward through the water

Sighting Looking ahead/at an object while swimming to keep on course

Swimrun Partner race where you do multiple swims and runs

T1/T2 Abbreviation for ‘Transition 1’ (swim to bike) and ‘Transition 2’ (bike to run)

Taper Reducing your training in the days just before your race

Tempo effort Challenging, sustainable effort

Threshold run A run at about 80% of your max heart rate for no more than 20mins

Time trials A set-distance session, where the aim is to swim, bike or run as fast as you can over the distance

Transition area The place where you rack your bike and swap kit between disciplines

Tri-bars Also known as aerobars, they help you race aerodynamically

Tumble turn Fast way of turning at the pool wall by performing a forward roll, push off and a twist to return to the initial stroke position

Turbo trainer A frame that attaches to your bike, turning it into a static trainer

Underpronation When your foot rolls outwards on impact

VO2 max A measure of the body’s maximal ability to use oxygen to produce energy

Washing machine Way to refer to a chaotic swim start!

Watt (w) The unit of measure in which power is expressed

Waves The groups which triathletes are put in to start a race

GETTY IMAGES

THE NEED FOR SPEED

After years of going big our man Brunty is trying something new this year... Going fast.

MARTYN BRUNT
Martyn is tri's foremost average athlete and is living proof that hours of training and endless new kit are no substitute for ability.

Happy new year everybody! I hope that Santa brought you lots of carbon loveliness in his sack, and that all your presents weighed less than 0.25kg – as all triathletes know, the lighter the gift, the better.

We are now in that happy time of year when all your golden dreams for the season ahead are still intact and have yet to meet the cold, hard tarmac of reality (unless you've missed any training sessions since the start of the year in which case, in your head, your season is over already). You've spurned the Christmas puds and mulled wine, resisted the urge to sit with your feet up watching festive tat on the telly, and managed to keep your heart rate down by not getting involved in unsatisfactory, snippy arguments with your family. You've probably been out on a training run or ride almost every day and have maybe even done a sneaky race or two in order to steal a march on your main rivals (aka your club mates). Well done, you are a true triathlete and you're ready to face the season.

WEEKEND WARRIOR

Traditionally this is the time of year when we plan our race diary for the year. In my case this is a hitherto unknown definition of the word 'plan' because in reality I enter races on a whim/when drunk/when I see someone I know boasting about a race on their socials, and I have the unerring ability to make them coincide with my birthday/my wife's birthday/the summer holidays. What would life be without a bit of domestic jeopardy....

For me it's also the time of year I decide what the 'next big thing' I'm going to do is. In recent years I have got into the habit of doing at least one event that makes people go "You're doing WHAT?!" to the extent that it is now expected of me. This is bad enough but in order to maintain my carefully crafted mystique of being a complete nutter, each annual challenge has to be bigger than the last. In recent years this has seen me doing things like swimming a million metres in a year, doing 100 mile ultras along cliff edges, running seven marathons in seven days, and in 2024 swimming both ways along the full length of Lake Windermere. This year however I've decided to focus on something even more terrifying – sprint triathlons!

Yes, after 15 Ironmans, 125 marathons, countless marathon swims and God knows what other endurance races I've forgotten about I'm going to do the thing I fear most – trying. For a mid-50s endurance athlete there is nothing more frightening than the prospect of trying to go fast because it involves doing all the things we dread most, like lifting our knees while running, getting out of breath, trying to get wetsuits off without sitting down, bending over enough to make tri bars worth using, mounting and dismounting while still moving, running through transitions instead of having a sneaky walk, and not taking 2000m in the swim just to unlock your shoulders.

In order to prepare myself for the horrors ahead I have begun asking my body to do things it hasn't done in years, like pedal at more than 60 rpm, climb out of swimming pools without using the steps (to be honest the chairlift was starting to look attractive) or running in a way that involves my feet leaving the ground at some point. I've even started going to the gym and doing tortuous things like mountain climbers, burpees, lunges, squat jumps, and tripping over boxes while trying to leap over them, all while wondering whether the next movement I make is going to leave me in a knotted spasm on the floor.

The die is cast though, no plodding mile after mile for me in 2025. It's going to be short, sharp and sweaty from here on in, and with sprint tris being done and dusted in under an hour (ahem..) at least I should be at the café/pub/hospital before closing. I've already entered my first two early season races with the aim of building up to hitting peak speed by mid-summer, and I'm not going to let anything get in my sprinty way – apart from the 24 one mile swims in 24 hours event in June I signed up for while scunnered on mulled cider. There is that, I suppose...

> *"To train, I've even been climbing out of the pool without using the steps"*

RACE SERIES | 2025 RACE LEAGUE | 2025 TEAM TROPHY | ENDURANCE TROPHY 2025

UK TRIATHLON RACE SERIES 2025

UK ULTIMATE TRIATHLON

29TH JUNE
ELLESMERE, SHROPSHIRE

2.4 MILE SWIM
112 MILE CYCLE
26.2 MILE RUN

UK ULTIMATE 1/2 TRIATHLON

29TH JUNE
ELLESMERE, SHROPSHIRE

1.2 MILE SWIM
56 MILE CYCLE
13.1 MILE RUN

UK ULTIMATE 1/4 TRIATHLON

29TH JUNE
ELLESMERE, SHROPSHIRE

0.6 MILE SWIM
28 MILE CYCLE
6.5 MILE RUN

OPEN WATER & LONG DISTANCE TRIATHLONS

ALDERFORD TRIATHLON

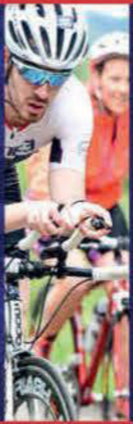
15TH JUNE
ALDERFORD LAKE WHITCHURCH

OLYMPIC
SPRINT
SUPER SPRINT
TEAM RELAY

BIRMINGHAM TRIATHLON

19TH JULY
SUTTON PARK, SUTTON COLDFIELD

OLYMPIC
SPRINT
SUPER SPRINT
TEAM RELAY



SHROPSHIRE TRIATHLON

31ST AUGUST
ELLESMERE, SHROPSHIRE

OLYMPIC
SPRINT
TEAM RELAY

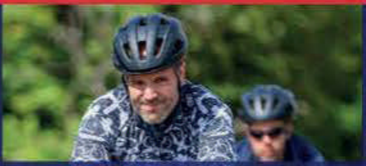
SHROPSHIRE MIDDLE

31ST AUGUST
ELLESMERE, SHROPSHIRE

2KM SWIM
78KM CYCLE
20KM RUN

POOL BASED TRIATHLONS

STRATFORD TRIATHLON 13TH APRIL
STRATFORD UPON AVON

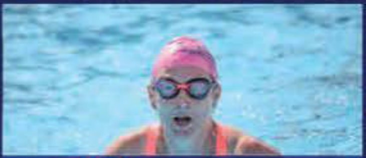


CHESHIRE TRIATHLON 11TH MAY
NANTWICH, CHESHIRE

HENLEY TRIATHLON 1ST JUNE
HENLEY ON THAMES

UK KIDS FUN DUATHLONS
FOR CHILDREN 5 TO 16 YEARS

YORK TRIATHLON 17TH AUGUST
YORK SPORT VILLAGE



NORTH WEST TRIATHLON 14TH SEPTEMBER
NANTWICH, CHESHIRE

WARWICKSHIRE TRIATHLON 28TH SEPTEMBER
STRATFORD UPON AVON

UK KIDS FUN TRIATHLONS
POOL BASED & OPEN WATER

UKTRIATHLON.CO.UK

High protein yogurts?
Sorted!
THE GYM KITCHEN
FOOD TO FUEL
MACRO COUNTED!
HIGH PROTEIN
BANOFFEE PIE YOGURT
20g PROTEIN
THE GYM KITCHEN
FOOD TO FUEL
MACRO COUNTED!
HIGH PROTEIN
SALTED CARAMEL YOGURT
20g PROTEIN
THE CLASSIC COMBINATION
THE GYM KITCHEN

Available at Tesco & Morrisons*

*Subject to availability